

**Appraisal of BEP (2004-2009):
Towards Deepening Partnership with
the Government of Bangladesh
(Final Report)**



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September 4, 2003**

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who made it possible to conduct this appraisal. We are particularly grateful to the staff of BEP at Head Office and in the Regional Offices in Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur, the donor representatives of BRAC's donor partners, the DLO staff, and the national and local government officials, all of whom gave so generously of their time, their insights and their expertise.

The Team members appreciate the warm welcome and on-going hospitality afforded us by the BRAC staff and the DLO staff. Their unfailing patience and constant good humour made it a pleasure to work with all of them.

Dhonnobad.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADP	Adolescent Development Programme
AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AL	Adolescent Leader
AM	Adolescent Monitor
AMR	Annual Monitoring Review
APON	Adolescent Peer Organised Network (ADP)
APON (B)	APON for boys
APON <i>Kishori Abhijan</i>	UNICEF programme ('adolescent journey')
AT	Assessment Team
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BDP	BRAC Development Programme
BEOC	Basic Education for Older Children
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BT	Batch Trainer
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CDU	Capacity Development Unit
CE	Continuing Education
CEP	Continuing Education Programme
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CPEP	Compulsory Primary Education Project
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGIS	Directorate General International Cooperation (Royal Netherlands Embassy)
DNFE	Directorate of Non-Formal Education
DoW	Department of Women (GoB)
DP	Donor Partner
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (GoB)
EC	European Commission
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDU	Education Development Unit
EFA	Education for All
EIC	Education for Indigenous Children
ELA	Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents (BDP)
ELTIP	English Language Teacher Improvement Project
ESP	Education Support Programme
ESTEEM	Effective Schools through Enhanced Education Management
FSSP	Female Secondary Education Stipend Programme (Gob)
FSSAP	Female Secondary Stipend Assistance Programme (GoB, World Bank)
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GNP	Gross National Product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Government Primary School
GPU	GoB Partnership Unit
HDI	Human Development Index
HKI	Helen Keller International
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate

HT	Head Teacher
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
IoE	Institute of Education
IoE	Institute of Education
IT	Information Technology
KfW	German Development Bank
KK	Kishori Kendro (Adolescent Centre)
KK	Kishori Kendro (adolescent centres, ADP programme)
KS	Kishori Supervisor
KS-PP	Kishori Supervisor – Pre-Primary
LFA	Logframe Analysis
MIS	Management Information System
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (GoB)
MRU	Monitoring and Research Unit
MT	Master Trainer
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NEP	National Education Policy
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation
NPA	National Plan of Action
PACE	Post-primary basic And Continuing Education
PE	Peer Educator
PE	Peer Educator (APON), <i>Kishori Netri</i>
PO	Programme Organiser
PP	Pre-primary
PPE	Post Primary Education (PACE)
PRIME	Primary Initiatives in Mainstream Education
PROMOTE	Programme to Motivate Train and Employ female teachers in rural secondary schools
PS	Pathagar Supervisor
PS	Peer Supervisor
PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTI	Primary Training Institute
QM	Quality Manager
RC	Reading Centre
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RM	Regional Manager
RT	Resource Teacher
RTI	Reproductive Tract Infection
SAT	Standardised Achievement Test
SESIP	Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TiC	Team-in-Charge
TTC	Teacher Training College
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UL	Union Library
URC	Upazila Resource Centre

Executive Summary

Introduction

BRAC's Education Programme (BEP) for 2004-2009 is at the cross-roads. Given certain conditions, BEP could represent a watershed in BRAC's deepening of partnership with the GoB. Subsequently, this anticipated turning point will most likely have far-reaching implications on the future thrust and direction of BRAC's BEP.

The goal of BRAC's BEP is to ultimately contribute to the reduction of poverty in Bangladesh. BEP 2004-2009 is a continuation of the previous phases along with the incorporation of a number of new initiatives.

All of BEP's components are relevant and appropriate under the umbrella of GoB's overall education policy. The National Plan of Action (NPA) II produced in 2002 states that the goal of Non-Formal Education (NFE) provided by NGOs is to complement and supplement the formal education system in order to cover the gaps to meet EFA goals. According to NPA II, the NFE target clientele consists of the pre-school children, the un-enrolled and drop-outs of primary school, and children and adolescents (3-5, 6-10, and 11-14 years of age, and adults (15-45 years) who have missed schooling (NPA II, p. 106).

The various interventions of BEP are made in the context of a set of specific needs and demands in the education sector in Bangladesh that the GoB is not able to meet or meet them most inadequately, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

BRAC's Partnership with the GoB

The establishment of 7,500 the pre-primary school, the training of SMCs, and the successful revival of the community schools represent concrete contributions made by BRAC in the partnership relationship with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) under BEP's Primary Initiatives in Mainstream Education (PRIME) program. For these initiatives, there is a groundswell of enthusiasm and unequivocal support that is emerging from the local government authorities.

Considering these positive outcomes, partial credit is due in the first place to the EC's funding condition for making this happen. This initiative provided an opportune moment to BRAC to initiate a substantial programme in conformity with its long-standing and clearly stated desire to work in partnership with the GoB.

Outside of PRIME, BEP's other components have also established collaboration and linkages with other government ministries (Ministries of Secondary and Higher Education, Youth, and Women and Children's Affairs).

Based on these developments, there is a promising potential for extending the parameters of BRAC-GoB partnership in the education sector.

While BRAC has achieved a vibrant partnership with the local government authorities in the primary education sector, the relations between BRAC and the central government are not that close. There continues to be some reticence on the part of the central government to enter into a real dialogue with BRAC for exploring other avenues of collaborative activities.

Prospects and Challenges in Merging BRAC's and other NGOs' NFPE with the Formal Primary Education System

In order to merge the non-formal and formal programmes into a cohesive programme through appropriate mechanisms and modalities that will need to be devised, a number of developments have to occur and some strategic actions will need to be taken.

First, substantial changes have to take place in GoB's perceptions, attitudes and vision on the role and contributions of NGOs in the primary education sector and how NGOs can work as "partners" rather than "sub-contractors" with the GoB.

A number of encouraging developments have taken place which have a good potential to bring about the desired change in GoB's perceptions, attitudes and vision. The high level of enthusiasm and support demonstrated by the local government authorities to BRAC's pre-primary school programme has the potential of inducing a bottom-up demand/pressure on the government for extending the BRAC's partnership in other areas of the primary education sector. BRAC's success in fully resurrecting the 44 dysfunctional schools that were handed over to it by the government has hopefully sent a clear message to the government on the capacity and competence of BRAC as well as the demonstration of the successful application of some of the elements of the NFPE model to a formal primary school. The GoB decision making NFPE graduates eligible to sit for government scholarships examination is a positive signal from the government vis-à-vis the recognition of the NFPE. On a smaller scale, there have also been encouraging developments beyond primary level with positive and established government links in a range of activities: in Post-Primary Education with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, in Continuing Education (skills training) with the Ministry of Youth, and in the Adolescent Development Programme with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs / Department of Women.

Second, the use of the terminology "non-formal education" needs to be dropped for a number of pragmatic and strategic reasons. The terminology has created an impression in the minds of many that non-formal education is: informal (as different from nonformal), ad-hoc, unorganized, unstructured, and inferior or second class.

If the nagging misinterpretations around BRAC's NFPE are exorcised, the essence of BRAC's NFPE has the following fundamental elements: (1) What BRAC's NFPE delivers is **primary education**, let alone a quality primary education; (2) Primary education delivered by BRAC is as "**formal**" as the primary education delivered by the government. It is ironical to note that some of these formal features in NFPE are lacking in the "formal" primary education system; and (3) The major point of departure between the formal and non-formal systems is the **mode and mechanism** of delivering primary education.

Third, the donor partners, through their Education Local Consultative Sub Group, can play a nudging and dialoguing role with the GoB to facilitate a GoB/NGO dialogue and partnership.

Fourth, although the donors lost their battle in designing PEDP II as a full sector-wide approach for primary education, there is still a possibility in involving NGOs when it comes to the implementation of PEDP II in such areas as pre-primary schools, ethnic minorities, etc.

The materialization of the above conducive conditions could create possibilities for expanding the GoB/NGO partnership for merging the formal and non-formal programmes of primary education. In the medium to long-term, such a partnership could also create possibilities for BRAC to play the role of a professional resource for educational development in the country in close partnership with the government through its emerging Institute of Education and Development. This role is in line with BRAC's long-term vision of a shift from its present

position of being a provider of basic primary education to that of operating as a Network of Education Resource Centres.

If the necessary conditions and dynamics alluded to above get into place over a certain period of time, a number of possible scenarios with their plausible time-frames on BRAC's place and role in the education sector are presented in this report.

If the conducive conditions for the merging of GoB's and NGOs' efforts in primary education do not materialize in the short to medium-term, with or without a sector-wide approach, due to government's inaction or/and unwillingness, BRAC and other NGOs should not become the sacrificial lambs at the hands of those donors who are aiming to support a government-led, sector-wide approach.

In the light of the uncertainties on the merging of the GoB's and NGOs' programmes in primary education and what, at the present point in time, sounds like the remote possibility of achieving a sector-wide programming in primary education in the medium-term, the rationale and justification for the donors to fund BRAC's BEP under its prevailing configuration, which includes partnership with the GoB, continue to remain strong. The main elements of this rationale are summarized in this report.

In relation to the shifting policies of some donor partners, there is a need to explore alternative financing mechanisms to support BRAC's BEP and the educational work of other NGOs. In this regard, the Appraisal Team is not able to make recommendations that would be realistic and meaningful since this task needs a study of its own¹ that involves extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (donors, NGOs, government, etc.). One idea that is currently floating around is the pooling of donor's resources into a single financing mechanism for NGOs. The mechanics of operating such a financing mechanism need to be thought through very carefully.

NFPE Schools

The main thrust of the NFPE Schools programme in BEP is to consolidate the advances made to date in extending the provision to include grades 4 and 5, curriculum development and quality assurance and to broaden the constituency base to include children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities.

The number of schools will remain at 34,000. The decision not to expand the provision is funding rather than needs driven. During Phase 4, BEP will specifically target poorly-served areas and communities.

The Education Support Programme will focus on building the capacity of partner NGOs and developing closer links with BEP in order to avail of the advances that have been made in the field of quality assurance.

The Appraisal Team is impressed by the advances that have been made to ensure the quality of the education provided in schools. The development of user-friendly materials and the on-going work of subject specific Master Trainers combined with revised monitoring procedures and the work of the Quality Assurance Specialists ensure the programme's on-going enhancement.

To further consolidate the quality focus of the programme, the Appraisal Team has recommended greater collaboration between BEP and the Research and Evaluation Division particularly with a view to developing a reliable summative assessment of learning at the end of grade 5.

¹ The EU has commissioned a study that is due to commence in October 2003 to explore alternative funding mechanisms for NGOs in Bangladesh.

Adolescent Development Programme

The Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) has made substantial and positive diversifications since it started over a decade ago. From being essentially a place where BEOC graduates could help keep their literacy habits alive, it has moved increasingly towards an extension of the concept of basic education, and – with the APON programmes – towards education that specifically addresses issues for the empowerment of girls and women. These developments are in line with both national (current GoB 5-year plan) and international policies (including aspects of the Jomtien and Dakar declarations on EFA), as well as with BRAC's overall vision.

The planned expansion in terms of the number of Kishori Kendros and the scope of activities offered is in response to the success of the programme. The Appraisal Team saw ample evidence of the fact that the ADP is valued and valuable, and particularly welcomes the introduction of APON for Boys.

The APON materials have been constantly reviewed to ensure that they are giving the target groups the knowledge they want and need in terms of empowerment. The model for running the programmes is particularly effective, with the adolescent leaders being both implementers and beneficiaries of the programme. Girls from ADP have also been successfully placed in other BEP components, but in view of the fact that paid employment opportunities outside the programme are limited, livelihood training programmes have been re-designed to focus on developing general business and economic awareness and skills for self-sufficiency.

That the ADP is reaching poor children is evidenced by the fact that the majority of members and participants are BRAC graduates, and the fact that in the savings scheme the preferred amount of savings is Taka 2 per month, indicating that they come from poor families. However, the majority of the members are also in secondary school, thus those children who do not get as far as secondary school (about 60%) are not included.

Continuing Education

The first Gonokendros (or Union Libraries) were established in 1995, and these institutions have undergone extensive testing and development since then. At present these centres are providing a wide range of services, including libraries (centre based, micro and mobile), reading rooms, children's corner, computers (70 so far), and they are areas for many socio-cultural and health related activities and training. The Appraisal Team concludes that there is no doubt that very significant functions in terms of developing "learning societies" are fulfilled. The Gonokendros are resource centres and meeting places and are satisfying local information, social and cultural needs of the people. The Gonokendros are instrumental in reducing the cultural gap between those who have and those who have not. Marginalised and illiterate people can come in contact with a world of the written word, and even modern technology as computers. Others come to maintain or further develop the competence obtained in school. Women, who are not allowed to leave their homes, are reached with mobile libraries.

The intention is that the Gonokendros will be self-sustained economically, based on strong local ownership and control. Results so far are in general positive, and BRAC has in place strategies to solve the remaining challenges.

Among the recommendations made by the Appraisal Team are to use the Bangla name "Gonokendro" throughout as a BRAC "trademark", and to conceive of these institutions as integral elements of the Dakar EFA broader concept of basic education. It is proposed to undertake a special independent review after 2-3 years. Another study is recommended for the very important Skill Development Training Programme.

Post-Primary Education

In this component, interventions to enhance the professional development of subject teachers and to strengthen the management capacity of non-government secondary schools have been successfully introduced towards the end of NFPE Phase III. The Appraisal Team firmly believes that these interventions are relevant, necessary and welcome. All developments have been made in liaison with government officers, government secondary projects and government policies, providing further evidence of BRAC's deepening partnership with the government.

This partnership was formalised at the 'Dialogue on Co-operation for Quality Improvement in Secondary Education' 02.09.03, with the setting up of a working group convened by Director Training, DSHE and including government and BRAC personnel. Credit for this welcome development must go to Programme Head, PACE, and Director General, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education.

The initiative is very much in line with BRAC's long term vision of itself as an educational resource for the state, with BRAC providing support that the government currently does not have the capacity to deliver. In view of this, the work with the School Management Committees and senior school staff is particularly important in strengthening concepts of good governance at the local level.

With increasing numbers of children from poor families entering secondary education, BRAC has a vital role to play in helping these children take part in meeting the demands of the 21st century. Recent research indicates that – for many reasons – BRAC graduates are underachieving in secondary schools. With the programme targeting schools in poor and high ethnic minority areas, it is helping to meet the BEP goal 'to ultimately contribute to the reduction of poverty in Bangladesh'.

While the existing and planned components of the programme are well-designed and well-targeted, in view of the fact that secondary schools are often not 'girl-friendly', and in line with BRAC's overall policies, the Appraisal Team recommends that gender-awareness training be built into all sub-components of the programme.

Overall Conclusions on BEP (2004-2009)

The proposed BEP is well-conceived, well-planned, and well articulated. BRAC as a learning organization has structures and processes in place to find out what is going on in the field, to analyse the problems as and to take remedial action. The Appraisal Team has made recommendations for consideration at the programmatic and capacity² levels. It has confidence in BRAC's overall technical, professional, managerial, and monitoring capacity to implement BEP. These capacities can be further enhanced by considering the Appraisal Team's recommendations.

If the funding sought is not available, decisions will have to be made on how to source funds elsewhere or how to reduce the activities planned for Phase IV. In the course of the Appraisal, each of the programme components was found to be well thought out, worthwhile and deserving of support. In light of these findings, the Appraisal Team believes it is not appropriate for it to make a recommendation on what should be cut. Rather, the Appraisal Team has made recommendations on the considerations that should be taken into account if such a decision has to be made.

² Another mission has just started to examine BRAC's institutional capacity in more detail

Summary of Recommendations

The key recommendations made by the Appraisal Team include the following:

Partnership with GoB

BRAC should develop a set of simple guidelines to assist the GPS teachers in redressing the problem of cognitive and other disparities between the PPS graduates and non-PPS children in Grade 1 in the shortest possible time.

BRAC should develop a strategy for engaging the central government in a process of dialogue and sharing with the purposes of achieving the goals of Education for All by the year 2015, fostering the recognition and value of BRAC's contributions, and developing a better partnership relationship. Among other elements in such a strategy, it is recommended that BRAC should approach the GoB to convene a meeting that involves the key civil servants in MoPME education and selected DCs, UNOs, and DEOs to review the progress made in PRIME. In addition to its own inherent merit of having such a review meeting, this process could facilitate GoB's better understanding and appreciation of the current role that BRAC plays in contributing to the improvement of the quality of primary education, and stimulate and encourage the GoB to consider collaborating with BRAC in implementing some specific components of PEDP II.

Prospects and Challenges in Merging BRAC's and other NGOs' NFPE with the Formal Primary Education System.

- BRAC should rename its NFPE schools as "Primary Education Centres" or "BRAC Primary Education Schools". At the pragmatic level, the new term more accurately describes the product delivered and its venue – calling a spade a spade. At the strategic level, the new term will help the GoB to more readily understand, recognize and value the primary education provided by BRAC.
- The donor partners, through their Education Local Consultative Sub Group, should play a brokering role in facilitating the setting-up a GoB/NGO Think Tank comprised of senior level officials from both sides to explore ways and means of merging the non-formal and formal programmes of education into a cohesive programme through a meaningful GoB/NGO partnership.

NFPE

- Regarding the location of schools, BEP proposal document should specify the criteria that will be used to decide which areas to withdraw from BEP.
- With regard to ESP, the detailed plan for implementing the key recommendations made by the ESP Review Mission, which has already been drawn up, should be included in the BEP proposal.
- The QAS should receive further action research training in BEP (2004-2009).
- The level of staff turnover among QASs should be minimised so as not to continuously deplete the expertise being built up among this cohort of staff.
- A closer working relationship between BEP and the Educational Research Unit within RED should be facilitated.

- Gender equality should be given on-going and explicit attention across all new areas of focus such as disability and ethnicity, including classroom behaviours, staffing, staff promotion, and awareness raising among staff.

Adolescent Development Programme

- As it is likely that the out-of-school adolescents are from poorer families, and probably the ones most in need of the information and development possibilities offered through the ADP, research should be conducted to find out why these girls are not generally part of the membership, and devise strategies to ensure they are included.
- ADP should explore the possibilities of extending APON (B) to those boys not in school. This will involve identification of no- or low-cost venues in places accessible to out-of-school boys, and offering classes at times convenient to them.
- While BRAC cannot cover all schools, it could help familiarise secondary school teachers in training at government colleges with the materials by presenting a full set of materials to the Resource Centres of the Programme to Motivate, Train and Employ Female Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools (PROMOTE), and brief PROMOTE Programme Liaison Officers on their use and objectives. These would then be able to disseminate this information amongst PROMOTE fellows, and all Resource Centre users. Materials could also be made available to Primary Training Institutions.
- BRAC should explore the possibility of linking with the forthcoming GoB / ADB-funded 'Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project'³, which will run concurrently with BEP. This might not only help create further employment opportunities, but could also provide a further source of funding for the programme.

Continuing Education

- BRAC should use the Bangla concept 'GONOKENDRO' throughout as a "trademark" instead of Union Libraries (UL) or Library and Multipurpose Community Centres (LMCC).
- A special independent review should be made of the Gonokendros after 2-3 years of the BEP programme. One aim of this review would be to identify areas of concentration. But it should also assess co-operation with other NGOs and the government. Further actions and decisions to be taken based on the findings of this review.
- In collaboration with the relevant governmental offices, BRAC should take initiatives to study the Skill Development Training Programme, its content and methodology, in terms of finding out in general its appropriateness for Bangladesh's youths of today and how the training is contributing to self-employment in particular.
- CEP should indicate how PACE can benefit from contact and exchange of experience with other BRAC divisions and sectors, dealing with, for instance competence development in the same fields.
- The BEP document should specify better how collaboration with both other NGOs and GoB structures are to be maintained in relation to the Continuing Education work.

³ TORs for PLCEHP, GoB, 2003

- BRAC should continually assess in particular the workload and other challenges faced by the librarians, to prevent them from being exploited and exhausted.
- BRAC should assess the situation in individual Gonokendros, and where needed provide more training, study-tours or other inputs to strengthen and inform the Gonokendro Board members and other resource people related to the Gonokendros. Appropriate budget should be made available for this.

Post-Primary Education

- As the underachievement of BRAC graduates and ethnic minority children in secondary schools is at present under-researched, including the reasons for the underachievement, BRAC should commission research to explore these issues, and for PPE programmes be adjusted as necessary to target these groups specifically.
- BRAC should develop a gender policy for the programme overall, and for all sub-components, the overall objective being to help ensure the achievement of gender equitable outcomes in target schools. Linked to this should be an appraisal of all PPE training materials and programmes for possible gender bias in language, male-female ratio of participants, and methodology.
- PPE should consider ways of improving teachers' English language competence beyond the necessarily limited input in the PPE programme. Options for consideration could include some form of (district-level?) distance learning, the development of supplementary materials for the teachers, and a closer focus on the language needed to use existing NCTB materials. Furthermore, PPE should be linked with Union Libraries and Kishori Kendros to advise on suitable English-medium materials that could be introduced to support English studies of secondary school students.

1. Introduction

This report is an appraisal of the proposed BRAC's Education Programme (BEP) for 2004-2009. The summary of the proposed programme, drawn from the Executive Summary of the Proposal document, is presented in the following section.

1.1 Background

The **goal** of BRAC's Education Programme for 2004-2009 is to ultimately contribute to the "reduction of poverty" in Bangladesh. The achievement of this goal is based on the assumption that the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and other NGOs, with the support of international donors, will continue to undertake poverty-reduction development programmes in all sectors.

The **purpose** of BEP has been defined as "acquisition and use of quality primary and secondary education by Bangladeshi students increased". This takes into account the fact that BEP, through the five major components of Phase IV, will be working towards:

- Providing access to 34,000 non-formal primary schools with an increasing standard of quality;
- Providing access to 7,500 pre-primary schools and 44 community schools;
- Collaborating with the GOB in enhancing the quality of education in the formal primary school sector;
- Providing 250,000 adolescent girls with life, leadership and professional skills;
- Providing a wide range of continuing education services through 1350 Community Learning Centres; and
- Enhancing the quality of education in 500 existing non-government secondary schools.

By providing increased access to education and developing the capacity of educational institutions, both non-formal and formal, primary and secondary, BEP hopes that its target beneficiaries will increase their acquisition of this education (as measured by student achievement) and use of this education (as measured by continued education and decrease in early marriage of adolescent girls, and increased desire for knowledge among users of continuing education services).

Expected Outcomes

BEP has identified six major outcomes in 2004-2009. These are:

Component 1 - Non-Formal Primary Schools: "Continuing access to cost-effective, quality primary education for poor children, prioritising girl, ethnic minority and ultra poor children, is ensured."

Component 2 – Partnership with GOB: "The delivery of quality primary education by the formal system is facilitated."

Component 3 – Adolescent Development Programme: "The life, leadership and professional skills of adolescent girls are developed."

Component 4 – Continuing Education & IT Services: "Rural communities have increased access to a range of quality, financially sustainable continuing education services."

Component 5 – Secondary Schools: "Non-government secondary schools are better managed and have improved capacity to deliver quality education."

Component 6 – Programme Support & Management: “The programme is effectively supported and managed.”

Summary of Changes from Phase III

BEP 2004-2009 will see continued growth and diversification. The focus will remain on the 34,000 non-formal primary schools and on increasing the quality of education within these schools; however, the issue of quality education will be explored in other contexts as well, including the formal primary sector and the non-government secondary sector. In addition, BEP will also explore the issue of how education can be used to bring about positive societal change through its adolescent development and continuing education programmes, and through the introduction of ‘values education’ in all its programming. There will be a conscious effort on the part of all BEP staff and teachers to create responsible citizens for the future and to promote the professional skills of women. In terms of target groups, BEP will continue to focus on poor children, prioritising girls and children from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, the support that these children receive will not be limited to the classroom; there is an increasing recognition on the part of BEP that, in order for sustained changes to take place in their lives, the children will need support beyond primary school. As they grow into adolescence, access to life skills, to quality secondary education, to new technologies, and to professional and leadership skills will give them a better chance at an improved quality of life.

In summary, changes in the programme from Phase III include:

- BEOC/KK schools targeted to older children will deliver the full primary cycle (Classes I-V) in four years (expanded from a three-year cycle covering a condensed Class I-V curriculum);
- With the assumption that formal permission will be granted by the GOB, BEP will commence teacher and supervisory staff training in the formal primary sector;
- The pre-primary school pilot will be mainstreamed in an effort to reduce the number of dropouts in formal primary schools;
- The Adolescent Development Programme will be given increased emphasis (and hence, have its own output);
- The secondary school pilot, focusing on teacher and supervisory staff training at the secondary school level, will be mainstreamed through the development of ‘model’ schools;
- The continuing education services provided within many Union Libraries will be increased to include information technology;
- Programme support services, including MIS, research, monitoring, communications, and capacity development, will be improved;
- New initiatives on NFP school teacher certification, on working with the GOB in one or two upazilas for coordinating primary school enrolment, on ‘inclusive’ education in BEP, and on providing women with professional skills and opportunities to participate in the workforce, will be developed and piloted.

Summary of the Proposed Budget

The total cost of the BRAC Education Programme 2004 – 2009 is 8,267,002,567 million taka or US\$ 134,718,387 million. After 1.96% Project income or Parent Contribution, the net requirement is 8,104,642,567 or US\$ 132,068,209 million. BRAC's contribution to the programme is approximately 200 million taka or 2.42% of the net requirement. 95.62% of the net requirement financing is needed from the donor partners.

1.2 Objectives of the Appraisal

The **objective** of the mission, as per the Terms of Reference (TORs), is to assess the appropriateness of the proposed BEP 2004-2009 in the context of national policies and developments in the education sector in Bangladesh plus BRAC's own vision of its future role in education, especially in the primary sector. The TORs also call for an assessment of the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of BEP.

In the context of a comprehensive sector approach, the specific questions that are being addressed in this Appraisal as per the TORs are:

- How can the NFPE system as a whole become part of the primary education system in Bangladesh to achieve the EFA goals?
- How can BRAC's NFPE activities complement Government's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) II?
- What level of support for BRAC's NFPE activities exists within government?
- What kinds of financing mechanisms apart from direct project support can be envisaged for donor support to BRAC's NFPE programme?
- What is BRAC's strategy post-NFPE IV for phasing out donor support and either incorporating their programme into a Government supported mechanism or changing the focus of their education activities?

This Appraisal also addresses the specific issues spelled out by the TORs in each of the five programme components of BEP 2004-2009 in the context of the overall mission objective, namely, Non-Formal Primary Schools, Partnership with the GoB, Adolescent Development Programme, Continuing Education Programme, and Post-primary Education.

1.3 Methodology

The Appraisal was carried out by a team of four consultants consisting of Yusuf Kassam (Team Leader), Janet Raynor, Anne Ryan and Anders Wirak.

In addition to carrying out the necessary documentation review, the Appraisal Team engaged in consultations with all categories of BEP's stakeholders: appropriate BRAC staff at the headquarters, appropriate BRAC staff in the regions, donor partners, GoB and local government authorities, government primary schools and secondary schools, and the ultimate beneficiaries. Field visits were made to the districts of Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur. A list of all persons consulted is contained in Annex 2.

The Appraisal Team used participatory methods in carrying out the Appraisal involving extensive stakeholder interactions throughout the entire process of the Appraisal.

2. Relevance and Appropriateness of BEP

This section assesses the relevance and appropriateness of BEP (2004-2009) in the context of national policies and developments in the education sector in Bangladesh at a broad level. Under this assessment, some specific issues are addressed in Section 3 of this report. The relevance and appropriateness of BEP in the context of BRAC's own vision of its future role in education, especially in the primary sector, are addressed in Section 4 of this report.

All of BEP's components are relevant and appropriate under the umbrella of GoB's overall education policy. The draft National Plan of Action (NPA) II produced in 2002 states that the goal of Non-Formal Education (NFE) provided by NGOs is to complement and supplement the formal education system in order to cover the gaps to meet EFA goals. According to NPA II, the NFE target clientele consists of the pre-school children, the un-enrolled and drop-outs of primary school, and children and adolescents (3-5, 6-10, and 11-14 years of age, and adults (15-45 years) who have missed schooling (NPA II, p. 106).

2.1 Partnership with GoB in Pre-Primary Schools

BRAC's pre-primary school program fits with one of NPA II objectives, namely, to "Institute a well organized and coordinated program of early childhood care and education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, using both formal and non-formal approaches, with emphasis on family and community-based programs" (NPA II, p.54).

The GoB estimates that there were 11.52 million 3-5 year old children in the country in 2000 and, of these, only 1.86 million were attending some form of Early Childhood and Care (ECCE) programme (MoPME 2002). Because an estimated 50% of the population lives below the poverty line, the GoB has targeted 50% of the ECCE target population to be served by the non-formal system, and 50% to be served by the formal system.

In 1999, the government started a small scale pre-primary education programme. However, for various reasons especially those relating to the provision of additional space in the GPSs, supply of teachers, materials and the lack of funding, the programme fell apart after a couple of years.

In the above context, BRAC's pre-primary education programme that is run in close partnership with the MoPME fills the government's void in this education sub-sector.

2.2 NFPE Schools

Since it was set up in 1985, BEP's priority target group has been children with little or no access to formal education due to the fact that they are poor, female and or living in poorly served locations. In 2004-2009 the move to open schools in ethnic minority areas and to offer access to disabled children significantly broadens BEP's target constituency⁴.

Plans are already afoot to deal with the implications of this move towards greater inclusiveness specifically with regard to disaggregating data in order to track the progress of these learners,

⁴ In November 2002 there were 7,600 children from ethnic minority backgrounds distributed within 628 schools (Department of Monitoring, BRAC. 2002. *A Comparative Study on the Performance of the Bengali and Ethnic Minority Students*. P1). Children with physical disabilities have also participated in BEP schools. There are currently 5,618 children with various disabilities in schools. However, up to now there was no deliberate effort to make special provision for the needs of either of these categories of children.

raising the awareness of teachers and staff trainers in order to promote non-discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, the development of 'inclusive' teaching materials and further relationship-building with agencies already actively involved with these groups.

National policies and developments in NFPE are considered here under the headings of *Partnership, Inclusive Approach to Access, Capacity to Deliver*.

Partnership

The *Education for All: National Plan of Action* (2002:24) calls on the government, NGOs, civil society, the community and other stakeholders to share the responsibility and work together to achieve the national goal of education for all.

To educationalists the world over the name 'BRAC' has become synonymous with the provision of innovative and effective schooling for poor children. As far back as 1993 educationalists recognised the potential of this distinctive approach to serve the educational needs of hitherto excluded groups of children⁵. Successive appraisals, evaluations, annual and mid term reviews of NFPE/BEP have clearly and unambiguously acknowledged the capacity of BEP to deliver worthwhile education to poor children, especially girls, and its capacity to mobilise and sustain community participation in school management. BEP's on-going appeal as a role model for other providers in Bangladesh⁶ and elsewhere around the world⁷ further reinforces the intrinsic value of BRAC's contribution to the global educational endeavour. Given this track record BRAC has to be seen as an experienced player with much to offer in the drive towards EFA in Bangladesh.

Inclusive Approach to Access

Since the foundation of the state, successive governments in Bangladesh have advocated encouraging girls, the poor, ethnic minorities and children with disabilities to participate in education⁸.

BEP positively discriminates in favour of poor girls. This policy permeates the selection of students and teachers, classroom behaviours and the depiction of women and girls in textbooks. In Phase 4 BEP's focus on access will be broadened to integrate children with mild to moderate disability within classes and to address the specific needs of children from ethnic minority groups.

Among all of the 45 ethnic groups poverty levels are high and literacy levels are as low as 10%. Members of ethnic minorities suffer widespread prejudice. In NFPE Phase III, by September 2003, 700 schools specifically for children from ethnic minority communities will be opened. This is essentially an extension of an existing activity. The first such schools were opened in 1998 in the Chittagong region and currently there are 218 schools operating in minority areas. In light of the lessons learned to date, the schools will operate slightly differently to the usual NFPE school. There will be 25 students and two teachers. Teachers and POs will be recruited from the same ethnic group as the children. During the same period, children of ethnic minority origin were enrolled in BRAC schools in regions other than the Chittagong Hill tracts.

⁵ Prather, C.J. (editor) (1993) *Primary Education for All: Learning from the BRAC Experience ABEL*: Dhaka.

⁶ This is evident in the ESP programme which partners more than 500 smaller NGOs.

⁷ The BRAC model is replicated in numerous countries such as Sudan, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

⁸ Second Primary Education Development Plan PEDP II 2003-2008 (October 2002) pp 2-6.

The focus in 2004-2009 on extending access to include greater numbers of disabled children is both to provide them with educational opportunities and to change attitudes to disability among the public and among BRAC staff. Simple and effective arrangements will be made to meet the special needs of these children. Perhaps even more significantly the integration process will generate a realisation that a significant barrier to participation in the life of the community often stems from the negative attitudes to disability.

The Appraisal Team welcomes these two initiatives as worthwhile in their own right, in keeping with the government agenda of greater inclusiveness, and as a move that will provoke worthwhile reflection and dialogue on the diversity of learning styles which will serve to enrich BEP overall.

Capacity to Deliver

Among the key problems in primary education identified in the PEDP II document⁹ as needing attention are inadequately trained teachers, poor curriculum specific subject knowledge, inappropriate teaching methods, poor facilities and infrastructure, and teacher absenteeism. Other than the facilities, which are functional but basic in NFPE schools, the other areas listed are not areas of weakness in BRAC schools. Consultants' reports over Phases 1 to 3 identify these specific areas as ones that have been particularly well attended to in BEP schools. For example, in the numerous evaluations that have been carried out there has never been evidence of widespread teacher or student absenteeism. Teaching methods and curriculum and material development are central pillars of the current phase and will continue to be so. Further quality enhancement is planned (through streamlining management, monitoring and evaluation procedures, strengthening the research capacity of BEP, and linking ESP and BEP more closely).

2.3 Adolescent Development Programme

The GoB's 5th five-year plan¹⁰ includes the goals of undertaking necessary steps for implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, within education, no clear mechanism is identified for achieving these goals. Beyond increased enrolment of girls, little is happening in the formal education sector to bring about these changes. With reports of increased poverty, increased violence against women, continued abuse of rights, and with Bangladesh slipping down the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure table¹¹, the need for interventions is clear. One of BRAC's four overall goals is the empowerment of women¹² and the BEP is targeting this, particularly through the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), working with and for adolescents poised to take the dive into womanhood. The success of ADP has generated strong demand for continued provision in areas where it is already operating, and has frequent requests to provide resources in other areas. APON courses in particular are oversubscribed¹³.

2.4 Continuing Education

The activities of the **Gonokendros** are closely linked to the extended understanding of "basic education" derived from the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. The Appraisal Team

⁹ PEDP II 2003-2008, pp 9-11

¹⁰ Ministry of Planning, 1998. Originally for 1997-2002, now extended to 2004.

¹¹ UNDP, 2003

¹² BRAC, 2002

¹³ BEP / BRAC, n.d

also concludes that as the centres have poverty eradication as one central objective, they confirm to the international Millennium Development Goals.

The GoB *Education for All: National Plan of Action (2002-2015)* reflects national policies in areas such as adult literacy, continuing education and youth development. Hence the GoB EFA National Plan of Action goal is

To lay the foundation of a knowledge-based and technologically-oriented learning society by enhancing and sustaining access, retention and provision of quality basic education to meet the learning needs of children, young persons and adults in a competitive world, both in the formal and non-formal sub-sectors of basic education.”¹⁴

This goal formulation contains the main elements of the BRAC Continuing Education Programme; with a flexible testing out approach in relation to high technology, with emphasis on sustainability and quality and reaching out to all beneficiary groups. Further, among the 7 objectives defined by the National Plan of Action, the following is closely related to CEP:

All young people and adults participate in appropriate programs and acquire learning, employable and life-skills for a better life.

Also, among what the EFA National Plan of Action calls policy framework the following reflect the CEP very well:

Direct all efforts towards establishment of a life-long learning and a “learning society”

Ensuring involvement and participation of all stakeholders and civil society in the planning, managing of implementation, monitoring and assessment of projects and programs; involve local government units in the organization and management of basic education programs in their respective jurisdictions.

The EFA National Plan of Action refers to the fact that continuing education is assuming greater importance globally. To sustain learning skills for non-continuing primary school leavers and the graduates of the non-formal stream is considered highly important for the country. Chapter 7 of the EFA National Plan of Action (p.103) elaborates in detail on Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE). This part gives several references to NGOs in general and BRAC in particular. The main message is that provision of NFBE has to be a collaborative effort, involving all stakeholders. One of the challenges in this regard is the fact that more than 500 NGOs are providing services with a multitude of agendas and modalities of provision. These NGO programs have over the years covered about 4 million beneficiaries, according to the National Plan of Action,¹⁵ while the government has covered more than 17 million children and adults. The government’s calculation of the needs of non-formal education in Bangladesh shows, however, that there is ample room for many stakeholders in this field.

As the table indicates, gap between the target and total need is found in three areas; the ECCE group, illiterate adults, and children in difficult circumstances (CDC), disabled and ethnic minorities.

¹⁴ GoB, Primary and Mass Education Division: *Education for All: National Plan of Action (2002-2015)*, Dhaka, June 2002, page 14.

¹⁵ Op cit p. 105

Table 1: Number of potential NFE clientele, by age groups, 2000/2001
In millions

Potential NFE clientele by age group	Total # in millions	EFA NPA II target
ECCE group – Aged 3-5 years, 50% for NFE	9.40	4.70
NFBE group (2000 base) – aged 6-15 years	12.83	12.83
Primary school dropouts 2001, 6-10 years	6.18	6.18
Illiterate adults 15-45, not yet covered by literacy program	23.14	11.57
PLCE targets, less 3.2 million covered by the 2 projects	6.81	6.81
Add 5% of above for CDC, disabled and ethnic minorities	2.92	2.10
TOTAL	61.28	44.19

Source: PMED, 1999, DNFE, 2000; and DPE, 2002. Here taken from EFA National Plan of Action p. 106.

Paragraph 7.3.8 describes DNFE's new Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development project. A model has been developed through experimentation through 23 NGOs, with 1800 participants. With World Bank and Swiss financing (cost of project is US\$ 71.7 million) PLCE I will cover 1.6 million neo-literates of TLM in 230 Upazilas. Another project, PLCE II, at a cost of US\$ 100.0 million (ADB and DFID) will cover the same number of recipients (1.6 million) in 210 Upazilas. The projects' components are: promoting an efficient system of continuing education, enhancing the planning, delivery and supervision capacity of agencies involved in CE, and implementing sustainable community-based and employment-oriented CE programs.

These large-scale projects will be implemented through selected partner NGOs and will be supported by technical teams in each Division, and they touch, to some extent, the same beneficiaries groups and relates at least sometimes to the same modalities/contents. The Appraisal Team would appreciate that this interface was better reflected in the BEP proposal under component 4.

The links between BRAC's Continuing Education Program and GoB policies and objectives, as found in the general sections of the EFA National Plan for Action, are easily identified. But one would have expected description of how the CEP intends to interface with other NGOs and government. Specifically, there is no mentioning (under component 4) of the US\$ 171.7 million DNFE Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Projects which involve NGOs and at least segments of the same beneficiary groups.

***Recommendation:** The BEP document should specify better how collaboration with both other NGOs and GoB structures are to be maintained in relation to the Continuing Education work.*

2.5 Post-Primary Education

With the rapidly increased and increasing demand for quality secondary education (mostly as a result of the impact of the GoB / World Bank / ADB / Norad inputs into the Female Stipend Programme), and the government's current lack of capacity to meet these demands, there is a clear need for intervention. Increase in enrolment at secondary level has not been matched by an adequate increase in the number of teachers or schools, resulting in serious overcrowding and lack of resources in many schools. Linked to this is an increasing demoralisation of the teaching force, a high dropout rate (especially of girls), and a drop in standards. As the latest BEP

monitoring review¹⁶ pointed out, and as is reproduced in the BEP proposal¹⁷, it makes good sense – in Bangladesh at least – for an organisation such as BRAC to move into this sector. The review goes on to say that although BRAC's educational experience is limited at the secondary level, 'it is clear that much of its broad educational approach would be relevant and that necessary inputs ... would be available'¹⁸

a. Consistency with GoB policy

Under the PACE programme, and with the agreement of the GoB, BRAC has recently started working with selected *existing* secondary schools to try to improve the quality of education provided. The target is work with 500 non-government¹⁹ secondary schools in rural and high ethnic-minority areas. This new initiative is currently funded by BRAC, and is an estimated 3.2% of the overall 2004-2009 BEP plan.

As the draft National Education Policy (NEP)²⁰ was suspended in late 2002, and the revised version has yet to be made available, there is currently no overall GoB policy for education. However, the draft NEP included plans for extending primary education up to the first eight years of schooling, thus expanding the concept and duration of basic education, and bringing Bangladesh more in line with other countries (the duration of primary education in Bangladesh is far lower than in most other countries, with total class hours of only 3640 hours, compared with an international average of 5,367 hours²¹). The SESIP programme was designed with this reform in mind, with secondary education defined as being from Classes 9-12. At present, for mainly logistical reasons, this planned reform is on hold.

But the fact that the government has given written approval for this intervention, and that government officials at all levels have participated in the BRAC workshops clearly indicates government support.

GoB policies, where they exist, are usually in the form of 'notifications' or regulations sent out to secondary schools, and as these documents are scattered it is difficult to get an overall picture of policies. However, an examination of three secondary-level GoB project documents demonstrates linkages between GoB policies and BRAC's post-primary education plans.

- BRAC is working in two of the five areas targeted by the ADB / Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) for higher quality education: improving teacher education, and strengthening school management and supervision²².
- PROMOTE, the GoB/EC 'Programme to Motivate Train and Employ female teachers in rural secondary schools' has specific targets for the training of teachers in the 'shortage' subjects of English, maths and science²³. Within teacher education, PACE is also targeting these three subjects.
- The English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), originally funded by DfID, has now been taken over by the GoB. In November 2001, the Secretary MoE initiated a series

¹⁶ Douse et al, 2002

¹⁷ BEP, 2003

¹⁸ Douse et al, 2002, p.49

¹⁹ These are schools set up by local communities, and account for about 98% secondary schools in the country. Although they are referred to as 'non-government', the government supports them by paying 90% teachers' salaries.

²⁰ Ministry of Education, 2000

²¹ PEDP II, 2002, p.11

²² ADB (n.d.)

²³ PROMOTE, 2002

of steps to develop the GoB-financed Phase 2 of ELTIP, commencing 1st April 2002. The secretary envisaged a major project with wide support in government, and an allocated 15-20 crore Taka over a five year period²⁴.

Over the last 18 months, BRAC has established links with all these projects, and there have been regular co-ordination meetings to facilitate coverage of common objectives. All developments have been made in liaison with government officers, government secondary projects and government policies, providing further evidence of BRAC's deepening partnership with the government.

This partnership was formalised at the 'Dialogue on Co-operation for Quality Improvement in Secondary Education' 02.09.03, with the setting up of a working group convened by Director Training, DSHE and including PD SESIP, PD FSSAP, PD FSSP, PD PROMOTE on the government side, and BRAC's Advisor BEP and PACE Programme Head. Credit for this welcome development must go to Programme Head, PACE, and Director General, DSHE.

b. BRAC's Vision

That there is a need for what BRAC is doing in secondary schools is clear, and the government – not having the capacity to do so itself – seems more than willing to let BRAC provide support to these schools. It also fits in with BRAC's own stated vision and goals, the vision becoming clearer through discussions with PPE staff.

BRAC's overall vision, as stated in 2002 Annual Report is: 'A just, enlightened, healthy and democratic Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and all forms of exploitation based on age, sex, religion and ethnicity.'²⁵

In line with BRAC's overall goals²⁶, the BEP goal is 'to ultimately contribute to the reduction of poverty in Bangladesh', and the stated purpose mentions both 'quality' and 'secondary' education²⁷. The latest monitoring report affirms that '...as far as the BRAC graduates moving into High Schools are concerned, continuing measures aimed at smoothing the transition are legitimate NFPE targets'²⁸.

BRAC actively encourages graduates of NFPE / BEOC to enrol in secondary schools. In 2003, 96.7% BRAC NFPE graduates were admitted into secondary schools, and 94.8% BEOC graduates²⁹. However, a recent study (Khan, 2002) shows that they are underachieving once they get there, and as a recent BEP documents says, things seem 'stacked against their ultimate success'³⁰.

PPE started working in schools in areas with a high number of BRAC graduates. In 2003 (with CIDA funding) it started working in 125 established schools in areas with high ethnic minority populations. A look at the 2003 examination results for these PPE schools in ethnic minority areas indicate clearly that these students are in need of extra support. The national average for SSC passes this year was 36.85%³¹, the Bengali students in the PPE schools managed an

²⁴ ELTIP, 2001

²⁵ BRAC, 2002

²⁶ BEP, 2003

²⁷ BEP 2003

²⁸ Douse et al, 2002

²⁹ BEP MIS, 2003

³⁰ BEP / PACE, 2003

³¹ Daily Star 16.07.03

average of 31%, but only 26% of those from ethnic minority groups were able to pass the exam³².

Field visits to three PPE schools provided a glimpse of the schools BRAC is working with. There is no doubt that these schools are failing to provide quality education, and that they need all the support they can get.

Recommendation: *As the underachievement of BRAC graduates and ethnic minority children in secondary schools is at present under-researched, including the reasons for the underachievement, the Appraisal Team recommends the commissioning of research to explore these issues, and for PPE programmes be adjusted as necessary to target these groups specifically.*

Discussions with PACE Programme Head indicate a vision in line with the Dakar Framework for Action, which says (emphasis added):

‘... No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without having a certain proportion of its work force completing *secondary* education. In most countries this requires an expansion of the *secondary* system’³³.

As in most developing countries, secondary education has until recently been reserved for the privileged few, but with increasing numbers of children from poor families entering secondary education, BRAC has an important role to play in helping these children take part in meeting the demands of the 21st Century, where secondary education has an important role to play in a more information-based, more competitive and more globalised world.

2.6 Gender Equity

Gender equality is a central pillar of BEP. The objective of BRAC’s own gender policy³⁴ is ‘To integrate a GAD/Sustainable Development approach in all programmes, projects and policies and ensure gender equitable outcomes’

BEP proposes to add a ‘Values and Equity in Education Unit’ to the Capacity Development Unit which implements training for all staff. The new unit will standardise the quality and content of training provided to all staff ensuring that special components such as gender, disability and ethnicity awareness are included.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that gender equality be given on-going and explicit priority across all these new areas of focus, including classroom behaviours, staffing, staff promotion, and awareness raising among staff.*

Many considerations of girls’ education in Bangladesh focus almost exclusively on access and enrolment, but there is a need to go beyond these indicators to see how this translates into empowerment³⁵. In Bangladesh, gender parity of enrolment at both primary and lower secondary levels had in theory been achieved in all but the *madrasah* schools by the late 1990s³⁶, but other indicators show that there is still a long way to go to achieve gender parity generally. Bangladesh ranks 112/144 countries included in the 2003 UNDP Gender Development Indicator (GDI) listing, which includes literacy and school enrolment. It was

³² PPE monitoring data

³³ World Education Forum 2002

³⁴ BRAC Gender Resource Centre, 1998. p. 12

³⁵ Kabeer, 1999

³⁶ e.g. Chowdhury et al 1999, BANBEIS 1998

121/146 in 2001, so by GDI measures progress has been made. However, Bangladesh is much nearer the bottom in terms of the Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM). The GEM looks at women in their roles outside the home and in terms of income, and in this, Bangladesh ranks 69/70 countries. In 2001, it ranked 62/64 – indicating that things are possibly getting worse for women in terms of empowerment. Overall, the 2003 UNDP Human Development Report shows Bangladesh squeezing into the 'medium development' category for the first time ever – an increase of 6 points from the last report³⁷. This apparently positive overall ranking shift carries the danger of overlooking the fact that women and girls in Bangladesh are still right at the bottom of the 'low development' category in terms of empowerment.

Recommendation: *The BEP logframe currently uses the GDI as an indicator. We recommend that the GEM also be included to help monitor progress in terms of the empowerment of women.*

³⁷ UNDP 2001, 2002, 2003

3. Review of Specific Issues in Each Programme Component

3.1 Partnership with GoB

a. Introduction

The GoB Programme encompasses two key initiatives that enhance the provision of primary education in Bangladesh. Perhaps even more significantly, the implementation of these initiatives articulates a real working partnership between BRAC and GoB.

With the purpose of forging a concerted and closer partnership with the GoB in the primary education sector, BRAC set up a Government of Bangladesh Partnership Unit (GPU) under its BEP in July 2001. This initiative was triggered by the condition that determined the granting of additional funds that were provided by EC when the expected funding from a German donor did not materialize. Under this new unit, a project called Primary Initiatives in Mainstream Education (PRIME) was initiated. The partnership with the GoB focuses on two main areas of activities: 1) PRIME which includes Pre-Primary Schools (PPS) for the mother government primary schools, and 2) Community Schools which had been handed over by GoB to BRAC prior to the establishment of GPU.

The main objectives of GPU are:

- Establishing a closer working relationship between BRAC and GoB at Upazila/local and National level.
- Sharing of experience and expertise with GoB personnel and others (MPs, UP chairpersons, civil society members etc.) engaged in primary education.
- Developing pre-primary schools as an effective gateway to the formal education system.
- Strengthening the existing link with GoB through the Community Schools run by BEP.
- Social mobilization designed to create awareness among the community people as well as persons engaged in primary education, and
- Above all, to improve the quality of primary education through BRAC's involvement with the main actors in this sector.

b. PRIME and Pre-Primary Schools

The overall objective of PRIME is to improve the quality of primary education through BRAC's involvement with the main actors in the primary education sector. The four major interventions of PRIME are:

- Social mobilization at the grassroots level
- Relationship building with local government authorities
- Relationship building with the central government authorities
- Establishing pre-primary schools

In a relatively short period of two years, considerable and innovative efforts have been made under each of the four above interventions covering 40 upazilas in 16 districts.

It is clearly evident that social mobilization has resulted in motivating an increasing number of communities and School Management Committees (SMCs) to demand improved quality of primary education and exercise their ownership of the schools. To date, BRAC has trained members of 24 SMCs.

Efforts that have been made in building relationships with the central government authorities have resulted in the granting of permission by MoPME to establish PPSs and to carry out social mobilization activities in GoB school catchment areas. This development represents a critically significant ice-breaker in BRAC's quest for entering into partnership with the GoB, a development that bodes well for the potential of broadening of the partnership parameters in the future.

The most popular PRIME initiative is the establishment of PPSs in the catchment areas of GPSs, on the GPS campus, and within the existing GPS premises. To date, 7,500 schools have been established since the initiation of the PRIME. Meetings by the Appraisal Team with the DCs, UNOs and Education Officers clearly reveal their strong desire, enthusiasm and unequivocal support for PPSs. The teachers of Grade 1 in the GPSs are satisfied with the performance of PPS graduates, who are referred to by the teachers as "ready-made" school children. According to their observations and assessment, the PPS graduates are able to read and write the Bengali alphabet and simple words, and manipulate numbers; they are alert, disciplined, self-confident, neat and tidy, and not hesitant to ask questions; and their attendance rate is over 90%. All of these attributes of the PPS children were observed by the Appraisal Team during their visits to several PPSs.

The draft report (August, 2003) of "An Assessment of the BRAC Preschool Primary Programme" conducted by Data International shows that the in-class performance of BRAC PPS students is substantively better than that of the non-BRAC cohorts in terms of attentiveness, participation in class work, spontaneous response to teachers' questions, performance of class work, obeying rules and regulations, sociability with classmates, articulation of questions and pace of comprehension, etc.

The PPS initiative is highly-valued by a wide range of stakeholders at the local level, from the community, parents, SMCs, government primary schools headteachers and teachers, DEOs and all the way up to TNOs and DCs. Commendable progress has been made by BRAC in building a relationship of partnership and mutual trust with the local government authorities. Over 300 of these officials including MPs have visited pre-primary schools, NFPE schools, and other BEP programmes.

However, the success of PPSs has created one transitory problem. In situations where Grade 1 has children who have not gone to a PPS are in the same class as the PPS graduates, there is a problem of disparity in the cognitive competencies and confidence levels between the two groups. While the teachers are improvising certain approaches and methods to address this problem such as peer learning, it would be helpful to provide them with some guidance.

Recommendation: The Appraisal Team therefore recommends that BRAC should develop a set of simple guidelines to assist the GPS teachers in redressing the problem of cognitive and other disparities between the PPS graduates and non-PPS children in Grade 1 in the shortest possible time.

In the assessment of the Appraisal Team, BRAC's intervention in the area of PPSs has proved to be the single most effective and tangible entry-point for strengthening the desired linkage and collaboration with the GoB.

Over the last several months, BRAC has been deluged with requests for setting up more PPSs. As the good word of satisfaction with the PPSs spreads from upazila to upazila and from district to district, it is more than likely that all the districts will, sooner rather than later, want PPSs established in their areas. It would be reasonable to predict that such a scenario will most likely emerge, say, in a couple of years.

The other proposed PRIME activity involving BRAC to work the Upazila Resource Centres (URCs) is still awaiting approval from the MoPME.

c. The Pre-Primary School Model

The PPS model developed by BRAC under PRIME is appropriate and unique. The major features that justify this model are its simplicity, low-cost, easy replicability, community involvement, effective pedagogy, and the strategic involvement of adolescent girls as teachers and supervisors, and organic linkage with the GPS. The model can be justified from a number of key vantage points:

Simplicity, low-cost, and easy replicability. The total cost of building a PPS on a GPS campus is approximately 22,000 Tk. With a cash contribution of 8,000 Tk from BRAC, the community is mobilized to construct a tin shed modelled on the NFPE school. The community participation involves donations from the community members, provision of some building materials and manual labour. In the GPS catchment areas, a tin shed house is rented from the community and then renovated to meet the required standards. However, ventilation in the pre-primary schools is not adequate. The two adolescent teachers (girls) receive a monthly honorarium of 300 Tk. each. The children pay a fee of 5 Tk. per month towards the cost of the materials, and the children of the very poor are exempted from paying the fees. BRAC has now decided to waive the fees in those upazilas numbering more than 300 that have recently been identified as poor and very poor with effect from August 2003.

Community involvement and ownership. In addition to the involvement of the community in constructing the premises for the schools, the parents of the PPS meet regularly with the teachers and supervisors of the PPS and the Headteacher of the mother schools to discuss the progress of their children and any problems faced by the children and in the running of the school. Members of the community are also chosen to become members of the SMC.

Activity-based teaching approaches and simple learning materials. The activity-based teaching approaches are adapted from those used in NFPE schools, and the learning materials consisting of 3 illustrated text books for learning the Bengali alphabet and words, numerals, and the environment and hygiene are simple but pedagogically effective. The text books are supplemented by story books and simple low-cost educational toys for learning the alphabet and numerals. Learning for the children is fun.

Opportunities for adolescent girls for professional development, continuing education and remuneration. The teachers are adolescent girls who work part-time. Each PPS is run by two adolescent teachers. These teachers, most of whom are BRAC NFPE graduates, are attending secondary or high schools. They receive a 6-day basic training followed by one-day monthly refresher courses. They receive a modest remuneration of 300 Tk per month. This income helps the adolescent girls with continuing their education. In addition, financial incentives are provided to these teachers for sitting for SSC and HSC examinations. The timing of the school hours (8.00 to 10.00 in the morning) enables the teachers to go to their respective secondary schools on time. BRAC is considering providing the teachers with bicycles free of charge.

The PPSs are supervised and monitored by older adolescent girls, most of who are BRAC NFPE graduates. They receive a 6-day basic training followed by 6-day in-service training.

Organic linkage with the GPS. The location of the PPSs ranges from the catchment areas of GPSs, to GPS campus and in the GPS premises. All the graduates of the PPSs are admitted to GPSs, the mother schools. The GPS Headteacher is the Chairperson of the PPS School Management Committee. Consultations and workshops are held with GPS Headteachers and teachers in the entire process of setting up PPSs -- from relationship building, discussion of the PPS model, carrying out surveys and mapping for the selection of children and location of the school, to the pedagogical methodology used in PPS, and performance of the PPS children. This process has fostered a strong sense of ownership of PPSs on the part of GPS teachers.

d. Community Schools

In 1998, the MoPME identified 194 dysfunctional community schools, and allocated a total of 186 of these schools to 10 NGOs. 44 of these schools were handed over to BRAC.

The GoB at both the central and local levels is very satisfied with BRAC's efforts at reviving the 44 dysfunctional community schools that were handed over to BRAC by the GoB. Their satisfaction is based both the good functioning of the schools and the good performance of the students. 94% of the teachers are female and student attendance rate stands at 94%.

The revival of these schools involved community mobilization, setting up SMCs, physical renovation work to the school premises, hiring and training of teachers, collaboration with the local government authorities, etc. The classes in these schools range from pre-primary to Class V. At present, 6,687 students are attending the schools. Of the 44 schools, 27 schools are operating up to Class V level.

All the costs of reviving these schools have been borne by BRAC. Although the GoB has not fulfilled its promise to pay the teachers' salaries, BRAC has decided not to abandon these schools.

According to the information obtained from MoPME meeting in April of 2003, it was reported that of all the NGOs who were handed over the 186 dysfunctional community schools by the GoB, BRAC has been the only NGO which has succeeded in operationalising these schools.

As a result of the GoB's satisfaction with the performance of these schools, it has recently allocated an additional 96 dysfunctional community schools to BRAC to make them operational for which BRAC is currently in the process of signing a formal agreement with the GoB.

BRAC has successfully applied several aspects of the non-formal approaches and methods used in its NFPE schools in making the formal community schools functional. These approaches and methods include the basic training of teachers followed by monthly refresher courses, the use of activity-based teaching methodology, co-curricular activities, the use of supplementary teaching materials, community participation, parents' meetings, SMCs, and close supervision and monitoring.

Of the 714 students of the community schools who completed Class V in 2002, approximately 91% with an equal gender ratio passed the examination and entered secondary schools. It should be noted that where the pass score in Class V in GPSs is 33%, the pass score set by BRAC for community schools is 40%. Of the 162 Class V students who sat for the government scholarship examination, 11 students (7%) received the scholarships. This rate is higher than the national average by 2.7%. In 2002, a total of 411,774 students took the grade V scholarship examination from GoB primary schools. Out of this number, 181,953 (44%) students passed the scholarship exam but only 17,877 students or 4.3% (those who scored the highest marks) actually obtained scholarships.

The transferability and application of non-formal approaches and methods in a formal school setting had been earlier experimented by BRAC through setting up 11 formal "laboratory" schools with the purpose of demonstrating to the GoB that non-formal approaches and methods can be effectively applied to a formal school. The community schools which are formal schools provided an opportunity to BRAC to apply the non-formal approaches and methods that were being experimented in the "laboratory" schools. In this sense, the practical application of the non-formal methods to the community schools has rendered the formal "laboratory" schools redundant, although these schools are still continuing to operate.

e. Conclusions

Considering the positive outcomes that have been achieved in BRAC's partnership with the GoB under the PRIME programme, partial credit is due in the first place to the EC's funding condition for making this happen. This initiative provided an opportune moment to BRAC to initiate a substantial programme in conformity with its long-standing and clearly stated desire to work in partnership with the GoB.

The initiation of the pre-primary school programme, the training of SMCs, and the successful revival of the community schools represent concrete contributions by BRAC in the partnership relationship with the GoB through MoPME. Outside of PRIME, there have also been encouraging developments beyond the primary level with positive and established government collaboration and links in Post-Primary Education, Continuing Education (skills training) and the Adolescent Development Programme (for details, see the relevant parts of Sections 2 and 3).

While BRAC has achieved a vibrant partnership with the local government authorities in the primary education sector, a partnership that has been growing by leaps and bounds, the relations between BRAC and the central government are not that close. There continues to be some reticence on the part of the central government to enter into a real dialogue with BRAC for exploring other avenues of collaborative activities.

However, given the inroads that have been made by BRAC in developing a some degree of collaborative relationship with the central government, and particularly the groundswell of enthusiasm and collaboration that is emerging from the local government authorities, and the cautiously-optimistic possibilities of BRAC's involvement in PEDP Phase II, the proposed BEP could represent a watershed in BRAC's partnership with the GoB. Subsequently, this anticipated turning point will most likely have far-reaching implications on the future thrust and direction of BRAC's BEP.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that BRAC should develop a strategy for engaging the central government in a process of dialogue and sharing with the purposes of achieving the goals of Education for All by the year 2015, fostering the recognition and value of BRAC's contributions, and developing a better partnership relationship. Needless to say, this strategy has to be guided with all the sensitivities and tactfulness involved in taking such an initiative. Among other elements in such a strategy, it is recommended that BRAC should approach the GoB to convene a meeting that involves the key civil servants dealing with primary education and selected DCs, UNOs, and DEOs to review the progress made in PRIME. In addition to its own inherent merit of having such a review meeting, this process could facilitate GoB's better understanding and appreciation of the current role that BRAC plays in contributing to the improvement of the quality of primary education, and stimulate and encourage the GoB to consider collaborating with BRAC in implementing some specific components of PEDP II.*

3.2 Non-Formal Primary Schools

To date BRAC Primary Schools have targeted children not covered in the current provision of primary education. In Phase 4 access will be extended to include ethnic minorities and children with disabilities. BRAC's role in filling the gaps makes it a key contributor to the drive for Education For All by 2015.

a. Numbers of Schools

The number of schools in BEP 2004-2009 will remain at 34,000. NFPE schools (8–10 year olds), will continue to be the mainstay of the programme at 20,500, BEOC (11–14 year olds) will number 8,500 and 5,000 will be ESP schools. These figures represent a drop in the number of NFPE (-1585) and a small decrease in BEOC (-440). The shortfall will be made up by a significant increase in ESP schools (+2025). (The ESP provision is looked at in detail below.) The rationale given by BEP for maintaining the same number of schools as in phase 3 is to do with the amount of anticipated funding from donors rather than potential demand.

A recent Education Watch Report (2003) puts nationally literacy levels in Bangladesh at 41%, with pockets of significantly lower levels (e.g. 19% in urban slums). These daunting statistics are compounded by estimates of the number of children (these estimates vary from 6 million to just below 13 million³⁸), who remain outside the formal system either because they never enter school or because they drop out.

There can be no doubt that there is an urgent on-going need for primary schools that target the sectors of the population most likely to be illiterate and outside the school system. The Appraisal Team are convinced that NFPE, BEOC and ESP schools remain important if only in terms of helping to fill the substantial gaps in the current provision.

Gaps in provision are not constant throughout the country. Where BEP has operated a number of cycles or where other providers are active, the demand for BEOC schools (targeting older children) and for places for girls has dropped. This is not the case in hitherto unserved areas or those pockets of disadvantage (such as ethnic minorities). The Phase 4 document proposes that BEP shifts its provision from areas and communities that are currently well served to those which are not³⁹. The document clearly deals with decisions pertaining to moving to new locations.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that the BEP proposal document also specify the criteria that will be used to decide which areas to withdraw from during Phase 4.*

b. ESP Schools

In June 2002 there were 2,975 ESP schools. Currently there are 5,475 schools. This increase was due to the availability of funding for these specific schools.

A thorough review⁴⁰ of ESP was conducted in early 2003. The report made specific recommendations relating to the goals and objectives of ESP, the relationship between ESP and

³⁸ GoB Primary and Mass Education Division. *Education for All: National Plan of Action (2002-2015)* June 2002 p25.

³⁹ BEP 2004-2009 pp 36-37.

⁴⁰ Lata, D., Rahman, S. and Yildiz, N. (2003) Report of the Education Support Program (ESP) Review Mission February – March 2003.

the BEP, the selection and on-going support of partner NGOs, monitoring and quality assurance procedures and operational issues.

Currently a number of these recommendations are being addressed. In particular:

- ESP has been moved from the Training Division and is now one of three initiatives, along with BEP and Continuing Education, reporting to the Deputy Executive Director. This move will facilitate closer linkages between BEP and ESP at HQ level;
- Six ESP Regional Managers have been appointed. Six monitors will also be appointed. Discussions are underway on the need to appoint accountants to relieve the work load of POs and allow them focus on quality related aspects of their job. These appointments will decentralise ESP management.

The Appraisal Team appreciates that the Phase 4 Proposal document was drafted before the ESP Review was conducted and therefore could not be expected to address the review findings nor to include subsequent organisational adjustments.

Recommendation Now that the Review has been carried out and changes have been made the Appraisal Team recommends that:

- the BEP Proposal document be amended to reflect the repositioning of ESP under the Deputy Executive Director
- the closer ties between ESP and BEP⁴¹ called for in the ESP Review be given priority in BEP 2004-2009
- the detailed plan for implementing the key recommendations made by the ESP Review Mission, which has already been drawn up⁴², be included in the Phase 4. In addition, the recommendation made by the ESP Review to confine ESP schools to Grades 1 to 3 be reconsidered in light of the changes underway. This will involve a review of the contextual situation, and consultation with heads of partner NGOs.

The Appraisal Team appreciates that the changes underway in the ESP programme are substantial and therefore require a great deal of dialogue and shared decision-making between all those involved. Currently a strength of BEP is its flat decision-making structure that allows it to respond quickly to needs in the field. The Appraisal Team believes it is important that the coming together of these hitherto separate programmes does not jeopardise this way of working.

Achieving a mutually agreed strategy for establishing closer ties between ESP and BEP may take time. It also needs to happen at two levels – HQ level and field level.

Recommendation: To initiate the process of greater integration at the field level the Appraisal Team recommends that a series of workshops be set up to bring together RMs and other field management staff from BEP and ESP. The purpose of these workshops would be to:

- familiarise participants with both programmes
- identify the needs and strengths of both programmes
- begin to articulate opportunities for possible linkages that will strengthen each other at field level.

When the Education Support Programme was set up in December 1992 one of its main aims was to build the capacity of partner NGOs. Now, ten years on, there are more than 500 NGO

⁴¹ Closer co-operation will enable ESP to avail of the quality management expertise amassed by BEP during Phase 3.

⁴² See the Gant Chart for Implementing Major Recommendations Made by Review Team, February to March 2003.

partners. Recent debate within BRAC has resulted in a decision to intensify the capacity building remit of ESP in Phase 4 mainly through the provision of training.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that the BEP proposal document explicitly refer to the capacity building aim of the ESP programme and based on the wealth of experience amassed by ESP during the past ten years, outline a strategy for:*

- *building the capacity of small NGOs to deliver quality education to poor girls and other excluded sectors of the population*
- *sharing their experiences with similar providers with a view to strengthening overall NGO sector provision*
- *identifying those relatively strong NGOs who are currently involved and who have now acquired the capacity to continue independently*
- *establishing partnerships with NGOs that are specifically involved with women's and girls' affairs be prioritised in BEP 2004-2009.*

c. Retention Rates

The impressive retention rates within all types of BRAC schools have not been adversely affected by the extension to cover grades 4 and 5 in NFPE schools. In addition, transition rates to formal education have been steadily growing⁴³.

In keeping with recommendations in previous reports⁴⁴, BEOC schools will follow the same school cycle as NFPE schools in the proposed BEP. As such they will be extended from 3 to 4 years. BRAC anticipates a slight increase in the drop out rate among the students who enter the BEOC schools at the upper end of the age range (i.e. 14 year olds). They may not continue for the fourth year.

At this stage of BEP's development, questions relating to retention have shifted to the secondary level. Studies indicate that although transition rates to secondary school are high, greater numbers of BRAC graduates drop out of secondary school. A study on retention rates and performance among former BRAC students in secondary school (Khan⁴⁵ 2002) showed that significantly more boys (41%) than girls (16%) drop out in Class VI. From Class VII onwards more girls than boys drop out (See Annex 5). The study pointed to a number of reasons for the dropout and (not surprisingly) concluded that socio-economic disadvantage is the main determining factor. Khan concludes that: "... unless ... BRAC's supports are continued at the secondary level, level of retention and attainment of the BRAC graduates in secondary school may not be at an acceptable level". (This issue is taken up elsewhere in this appraisal report.)

What this study makes very clear is that the major reason for dropout at secondary level is one that cannot be addressed solely at primary level. These children are poor and that fact alone makes it difficult for them to stay on in secondary school. It is reasonable to conclude that managing to retain these poor children in BRAC primary schools is mainly due to the customised in-built supports within these schools.

d. Performance

The BEP Annual Monitoring Review (2002 p14) points out that measures to improve quality do not automatically guarantee better learning outcomes. How best to measure these outcomes has generated a great deal of debate within BRAC and among those who have reviewed the

⁴³ The introduction of the stipend for girls has undoubtedly contributed to this growth.

⁴⁴ See the Annual Monitoring Review 2002

⁴⁵ Khan, Md. K. A. (2002) *Status of BRAC graduates in Secondary Schools: An Exploratory Investigation* Unpublished paper, Research and Evaluation Division

programme over the past five years. Currently three measures are used to track performance – the Education Watch Competencies Test, the ABC Test and monitoring reports.

e. Achievement Testing

The phase 4 proposal does not mention the use of SATs as a tool for tracking achievement. There are no plans to develop a SAT or to administer a summative standardised test of competencies to all children completing grade 5. It is felt that to do so would require a major effort that is beyond the capacity of RED and BEP.

Since 2000, BRAC has annually administered the Education Watch Competencies Test to a sample of 420 students in NFPE completing grade 5. In addition it has administered a Basic Competencies Test (developed in response to the Jomtien Conference in 1990) to 420 children who have completed grade 3 in each of NFPE, BEOC and ESP schools. RED is responsible for administering the test and analysing the findings.

Two reports⁴⁶ have been compiled based on the results of three years testing. The results for the grade 5 tests show a pattern of stability with 18 competencies being achieved on average each year.

The grade 3 tests show no significant changes in the competencies being achieved in NFPE schools and variation in the ESP schools (a drop in the middle year and an increase in the third year). The BEOC schools show a sustained decline. In addition a gap between girls' and boys' achievements first detected in 1999 has continued to widen in favour of the boys in both NFPE and BEOC schools.

BEP and RED are eager to develop a test that would convey an accurate picture of the programme's intended learning outcomes. Within the BEP there is a commitment to teach to the competencies – workbooks and teacher guides have been developed with the competencies very much in mind. Many of the 23 competencies which are not included in the test are felt to be important within BEP but because they are not easy to measure they are omitted from the test.

The testing tool itself is felt to be alien to the children. Educators within the programme and outside consultants are anxious not to teach to the test although doing so would be likely to raise the level of achievement. It is understandably felt that teaching with the test in mind would compromise the overall aims of the programme.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team believes that a reliable testing procedure is needed in order to compare current performance with that of previous years and in order to compare the performance of one service provider with another. Consequently it recommends that RED and BEP together develop a reliable system of performance tracking in BEP 2004-2009.*

f. Monitoring Reports

The newly revamped BEP monitoring system is a rich source of performance data. At the end of an extensive review and consultation period a more streamlined information gathering tool has now been compiled and piloted. The pilot phase ended in June and the new report format is now being mainstreamed. The system generates both quantitative and qualitative data

⁴⁶ Nath, S. (2003) 'Achievement of Competencies of the Students of BRAC Non-Formal Primary Schools, 2000-2002'. Unpublished paper, ERU, RED.

Nath, S. (2002) 'Basic Competencies of the Graduates of BRAC Non-formal Primary Schools Declining'. Unpublished paper, ERU, RED.

pertaining to environmental factors and to pedagogical performance. These data are shared with field staff and HQ. (See Annex 6 for details of how the data are intended to be used by different levels of staff.)

A noteworthy feature of the monitoring review is the effort that has gone into making the process participative, transparent and accountable. Teachers and field staff have been familiarised with the purposes of monitoring at the micro and macro levels. They also contributed to the improvements that have been made. Under the new system, when a monitor visits a school feedback is given to the students on their work, and to the teacher and staff immediately responsible for the particular school. In this way any problems that emerge can be dealt with quickly.

The greater sensitivity of this instrument and its capacity to trouble shoot problems as they appear makes it a far more appealing performance indicator to BEP. The revised monitoring process incorporates dialogue and interaction with those involved at every step, however, the application of the testing instrument itself is as clinical as any other test. However, it is the in-built short feedback loop of the monitoring process that makes it fit so well with a system that favours speedy corrective action over abstract detached measurement.

The Appraisal Team is very impressed with the monitoring system and believes that it will greatly enhance the overall quality thrust of the BEP during the remainder of Phase 3 and into BEP 2004-2009.

g. Materials Development

Subject specific curriculum groups within the EDU have been to the fore in implementing the decision to cover grades 4 and 5 which was taken at the end of phase II. Since then these groups have been directly involved in:

- preparing workbooks and teacher guides for the new and for the existing lower grades so that there is a smooth transition from grade 3 to grade 4
- devising a similar format in workbooks and guides so that children and teachers become familiar with the approach
- developing training modules on the use of new materials for teachers and teacher trainers, supervisory staff, school monitors etc
- developing the subject expertise of the Core MTs and QASs
- establishing mechanisms to get swift feedback from field trials of materials.

The curriculum subject groups have been strengthened over the past eighteen months. Five subject specialists have been hired and five experienced field staff have been transferred to work in HQ. The Curriculum groups are supported by a three person illustration and design team.

After a period of experimenting with government textbooks in grades 4 and 5 in all subjects except mathematics, it has been decided to develop workbooks and teacher guides specifically for BRAC schools in all subjects. The Appraisal Team view the decision to supplement government textbooks with workbooks and teacher guides as a reasonable and pragmatic response to the needs of the field and advice from outside consultants. Government textbooks have proven difficult for teachers and students to use, have not always been available on time and have been found not to cover the full range of National Terminal Competencies. The supplementary materials address these shortcomings (BRAC: these 'workbooks', and related activities, are embedded within NCTB texts). Grade 4 materials are completed and grade 5 materials will be finished by the end of the current phase.

The Appraisal Team believes that a hallmark of quality focused curriculum development includes a capacity to experiment, revise and pilot materials without jeopardising or unduly

interrupting the functioning of the schools. The EDU has proven itself adroit in this way of working. The Appraisal Team is satisfied that the curriculum groups are capable of continuing the task of material development and production in the next phase.

h. English

English language teaching is mentioned briefly in the BEP LFA. This is an item that has generated concern for some time and therefore was afforded some attention by the Appraisal Team. The 2002 Annual Monitoring Review (p15) recommended that an English Language Learning LFA be developed to systematically plot a way to improve the situation. Initiatives in response to this recommendation have already been undertaken or are in the pipeline (e.g. English language training has been delivered to RMs and QASs, and language teaching workshops covering Bangla and English will be held in November 2003).

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that the plan to improve English language teaching be included in the proposal document.*

The AMR (2002 p1) also called on BEP to undertake a major overhaul of its English language provision and to "... pioneer a wholehearted and imaginative drive to achieve a high standard of English language learning in its own schools and, thereafter, in all primary schools". The Appraisal Team believes that the extent of the effort proposed would require an undue investment of resources and is beyond the needs of BEP at this time. The Team believes that the efforts that have been made to date and those planned for the future are reasonable given the constraints of the circumstances in the classroom and within the EDU.

i. Capacity Building

Over the past year the QASs have received training in action research. Acquiring this skill is crucial to support the shift towards quality enhancement that began in Phase 3 and remains a key feature in the next phase. The capacity of the QASs to draw sound pedagogical inferences from what they observe and hear in the field is vital if they are to play the developmental role envisaged for them. To do this they need to be able to engage in systematic inquiry.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that the QAS receive further action research training in 2004-2009.*

The Appraisal Team is concerned that the constant movement of QASs within BEP (for example only 7 of the 56 QMs in position in 2000/1 are still working as QASs; 22 have been promoted to RM and the rest have been redeployed elsewhere in BRAC). Although the skills of the QM/QAS staff are in use elsewhere and therefore strengthening the overall programme, the scale of movement is such that it is contributing to a loss of expertise and experience among the QASs as a group. The Appraisal Team appreciates that a contributing factor to the movement of QASs (and other senior staff) was the redeployment of staff to BDP in 2000 when serious funding difficulties were experienced. Restructuring is still going on in BEP to replace staff who were lost at that time. Now that the programme is stabilising, the problem of staff turnover may lessen without any interventions.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that, without unduly restricting the career prospects of individual QAS staff, consideration be given to ensuring the level of turn over does not continuously deplete the pool of research expertise and general 'analytical disposition' being built up among this cohort of staff.*

j. Teacher Qualification

The Phase 3 Appraisal recommended exploring the possibilities of formally certifying NFPE teachers. The process has now begun. A stipend is offered towards the costs incurred by teachers studying for their SSC or HSC. As of the end of July 1,046 teachers had gained admission to SSC and 473 to HSC courses. Currently teachers who are hired to work in NFPE schools (other than those from ethnic minority groups) have SSC level education. This stipend therefore offers an opportunity for teachers who have been in the system a long time to up grade their education.

The Appraisal Team welcomes this initiative because it affords opportunities to the individual teachers who decide to avail of it and because it is a positive signal that serves to encourage adult women to return to learning.

The need to strengthen BRAC's capacity to deliver quality teaching and teacher-training for English in NFPE was stressed heavily in the latest monitoring review⁴⁷. This is equally true for the PPE programme. Many students, and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds⁴⁸, are failing to get the SSC because they fail in English. Without the SSC, these students have limited chance of breaking through the poverty barriers.

Recommendation: *BRAC should actively continue its search to find experienced ELT professionals in order to strengthen its capacity to deliver quality English language teaching at all levels.*

k. Quality Management

There are essentially two distinct lines of school management within the BEP. One has operational responsibility and the other developmental responsibility. At times the demarcation lines between both are blurred but in the main they maintain a discrete integrity. The Appraisal Team believes that without a degree of separateness it would be difficult to maintain high levels of efficiency in the already streamlined delivery system and the quality related developments would be constrained by on-going logistical needs.

In the area of quality maintenance relating to pedagogy, tiers of staff including teachers, monitors, Batch Teachers, Master Trainers, Core MTs, QASs and the curriculum groups within the EDU have clearly designated responsibilities. The Appraisal Team is satisfied that together they ensure that learning is going on in the classroom and that that learning incorporates the National Terminal Competencies and the essential values that underpin the BRAC approach.

The Appraisal Team is satisfied that a comprehensive quality management structure is now in place to augment the existing service delivery structure for schools. This is very much in keeping with the 'quality enhancement' focus of phase 3. Furthermore the Appraisal Team believes that BEP has now evolved to a stage of development when it would benefit from expanding its research capabilities and that BEP can best address its research needs by strengthening its relationship with RED.

By so doing the existing high level of expertise within RED⁴⁹ can be better harnessed to serve the needs of the education programme. Based on discussions with RED and BEP, the Appraisal

⁴⁷ Douse et al, 2002

⁴⁸ Khan, 2002

⁴⁹ Smillie, I. (1997) *Words and Deeds: BRAC at 25*. BRAC: Dhaka. In this book Smillie described RED as "Probably the most significant NGO research effort anywhere, RED has maintained a high standard and a prolific output of studies and evaluations". (P18).

Team is satisfied that there is willingness on the part of both parties to develop a significantly closer working relationship.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that BEP and RED develop a closer and more collaborative working relationship.*

In order to facilitate a closer working relationship between BEP and the Educational Research Unit within RED, the Appraisal Team recommends that:

(a) the staff of the Educational Research Unit within RED be made fully aware of the extent of the developments within BEP during phase 3, in particular:

- the range of quality assurance mechanisms currently in place;*
- the present status of curriculum development and material production;*
- the link-role played by the QASs in feeding information from the field to HQ and back to the field;*
- the management and pedagogical responses generated to date by BEP in response to the challenges posed by the national terminal competencies, the extent of the target group's social, economic and other disadvantages, the capacity of teachers, the scale of the programme, and the resources available*
- the Educational Research Unit collaborate with in BEP in ways that complement and elaborate on the qualitative micro level studies currently being undertaken by the Monitoring and Research Unit and by the QASs*
- the timeframe for completing jointly agreed research projects be shortened considerably*
- consideration be given to allocating two of the researchers within the Education Research Group in RED to work exclusively with BEP*

(b) priority be given to undertaking the following two specific pieces of work

- devising a comprehensive and reliable system of performance tracking to be applied in BEP 2004-2009 in order to compare the current performance of learners with that of previous years and in order to compare the performance of one service provider with another*
- exploring the reason why there is an apparently growing disparity between the attainment of girls and boys in BEP schools*

I. Cost-effectiveness

The yearly recurrent cost per student in government primary schools was Tk 1,031 (US\$ 17) in 1999/2000⁵⁰. The actual unit⁵¹ costs for BRAC schools are currently as shown in the table on the next page.

In any consideration of the cost effectiveness of BEP schools a number of factors have to be taken into account. Some of these factors are not immediately amenable to a purely economic measurement.

⁵⁰ Figure quoted in the *Daily Star* 7th July 2003

⁵¹ The recurrent costs shown in the government figures and the actual costs shown in BRAC figures are not alike in the items included in the calculations. Nevertheless they serve as a rough guide to the costs of both systems.

<i>School type</i>	<i>Cost per student per year</i>	<i>Cost per student per grade</i>
NFPE	Tk 1,017 (US\$ 17.5)	Tk 813 (US\$ 14.0)
BEOC	Tk 1,168 (US\$ 20.1)	Tk 701 (US\$ 12.1)
ESP	Tk 835 (US\$ 14.4)	Tk 835 (US\$ 14.4)

(See Annex 7 for more details)

Ten years ago Ahmed⁵² (p. xv) noted that:

Even with annual costs per enrolled student in BRAC and the formal school system approximately equal, the relatively high attendance rates, lower repetition rates, higher Class 111 completion rates, and higher Class 1V continuation rates for BRAC students mean that BRAC schools are substantially more cost efficient per graduate than the Government's formal schools.

Although the costs of both systems remain on a par, significant changes have taken place in BRAC schools (e.g. extended coverage to include Grades 4 and 5, quality improvements, improvements in retention and transition rates to secondary school). Therefore one could argue that the BRAC schools are now even more cost efficient than they were ten years ago.

In addition to the efficiency argument, more and more staff within BRAC and outside consultants are asking whether it is appropriate to compare the achievements of BRAC pupils with government pupils in light of their often vastly different social and economic circumstances. Chabott⁵³ (2003 p5) eloquently captured the differences when she stated:

'Both within the BEP and between the BEP and government schools, we should not be making comparisons without controlling for the quality of the most important input in any school system: the learners. The concept of 'learner quality' is strongly affected by investments in learners (usually by parents) external to their classroom experience; this variable should capture factors such as learners' school readiness and the amount of support learners receive for supervised study ... outside the classroom. Both of these factors are, of course, highly correlated with the socio-economic status of the learners' families.'

Implied in this observation is a high level of private investment in children from better-off backgrounds that are essentially hidden in any straight forward comparison of the cost of implementing a delivery system. Implied also is an appreciation that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are struggling against tremendous odds that can be obscured by statistics. For example it is possible to attribute a financial value to the private investment in the education of children from different backgrounds but it is very difficult to cost the differentials in cultural capital between those whose parents never went to school and those whose parents did. Nevertheless, these differentials greatly influence the opportunities children have to access education, stay within the system and to perform to their full potential.

Considerations of this nature will become even more pertinent in BEP 2004-2009 as more BRAC schools are opened in relatively isolated areas and as the target group is widened to include children who experience multiple disadvantages. The cost of delivering the service has to take account of the 'value added' component in terms of bringing more unserved children into the education system.

The Appraisal Team believes that the salient question in relation to cost effectiveness is whether BRAC students would go to school at all, or if they enrolled, whether they would remain in

⁵² Ahmed, M. in Prather (ed.) Op. Cit.

⁵³ Quoted from a note written by consultant Colette Chabott to Eram Mariam and Kaniz Fatema summarising the work undertaken with the MRU 9-11 June 2003.

school, if the BRAC option was not available. The Team believes that at this point in time it is more likely that the vast majority of children who attend BRAC schools would otherwise be outside the school system.

3.3 Adolescent Development Programme

The social and life skills training provided under ADP is consistent with BRAC's goal to empower women and with the Education For All goal for all young people to acquire learning, employable and life-skills for a better life.

The TORs call for an examination of the rationale for expanding ADP activities within BEP, their relevance to BRAC's involvement in basic education for poor children, and the ADP's contributions to gender empowerment.

a. 'Basic' Education

The 1990 Jomtien conference on Education For All defined basic learning rights and needs as including essential learning *tools* and basic learning *content*⁵⁴. While both the formal and non-formal primary system include the 'tools' (such as literacy and numeracy), they do not go far in terms of the content, which is of particular relevance to adolescents. The Dakar EFA Framework for Action expanded on this point, saying:

'Young people, especially adolescent girls, face risks and threats that limit learning opportunities and challenge education systems. These include exploitative labour, the lack of employment, conflict and violence, drug abuse, school-age pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Youth-friendly programmes must be made available which provide the information, skills, counselling and services needed to protect them from these risks.'⁵⁵

Both of these key EFA documents clearly indicate that 'basic education' goes beyond what is offered in Classes I-V in Bangladesh, the content of which is perhaps dealt with by older children. ADP supplements existing basic education provision; it fills the gaps, and is specifically designed to contribute to girls' empowerment – both in their family lives and by increasing their visibility outside the household sphere⁵⁶.

The ADP, in response to poor provision of initiatives for poor adolescent girls, started their Reading Centres scheme in 1992, initially to support graduates of BEOC in the maintenance and improvement of their learning. This long-established but ever-changing component of the ADP responds to the needs and stated demands of the users. With an increasing number of poor girls now entering secondary schools (linked to the Female Stipend Programme which started nationwide in 1994), the focus has shifted because the majority of members – while still largely BRAC graduates – are now in secondary schools. The content of the programmes has also shifted, and through the APON programme (pre-dating the Dakar conference, showing that BRAC has its finger on the pulse) has developed along the lines advocated for adolescent girls in the Dakar framework. ADP is a logical extension of the NFPE / BEOC programmes.

⁵⁴ World Conference on Education for All, 1990

⁵⁵ World Education Forum, 2000, para 35

⁵⁶ UNICEF 2003

b. Reaching Poor Children

About 76% KK members are BRAC graduates⁵⁷, and if being a BRAC graduate serves as a proxy indicator of poverty, we can assume that the ADP is catering to poor children. Another indicator comes from the savings scheme run through the KKs. Members are encouraged to try to save money on a regular basis. A recent survey⁵⁸ of 823 girls shows that almost all (c. 98%) wanted to save regularly, but given the options of saving Taka 2, 5 or 10 a month, over 70% thought the target of Taka 2 per month was the most feasible, indicating that these girls are indeed from poor families - where Taka 2 is a significant amount.

However, while it can be demonstrated that ADP is serving the needs of poor children, there are many other poor adolescents who are not part of ADP. These are the ones who, for a variety of reasons - but the main one being poverty - do not attend secondary school, may not have even started, let alone completed primary school. Less than half the children in Bangladesh enter secondary education, and even fewer complete it.

Despite the fact that membership is open to people of all kinds of educational backgrounds, despite the fact that activities within the centres do not require a high level of literacy, and despite the fact that APON methodology - through group reading and explanations / discussions - caters to those with low literacy levels, there are very few members who are not in, or have been in, secondary school. During the field visits, discussions with KK members indicated that they all knew girls of secondary age who were not going to school, and who were not members of any part of the ADP.

Recommendation: *As it is likely that the out-of-school adolescents are from poorer families, and probably the ones most in need of the information and development possibilities offered through the ADP, the Appraisal Team recommends that research be conducted to find out why these girls are not generally part of the membership, and devise strategies to ensure they are included. This will also help bring APON programmes in line with UNICEF's main target groups.*

The value of the APON (boys) programme is discussed below, and expansion to this target group is well justified, and another logical extension of existing programmes. However, for logistical reasons, APON (B) deliberately targets those in formal secondary schools, and only those in Class 9 - by which time a large number of more disadvantaged children have dropped out. While this link with secondary schools is to be welcomed, consideration should also be given to those boys who are not in school. As with the girls, there is probably an even greater need for APON messages to get through to those who are left out of the formal education system.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that ADP explore the possibilities of extending APON (B) to those boys not in school. This will involve identification of no- or low-cost venues in places accessible to out-of-school boys, and offering classes at times convenient to them.*

c. Rationale for Expansion

The planned expansion is clearly tied to the expansion of the notion of what 'basic' education is, and is in line with both global and national policies and targets. The design and content of the programme is geared towards gender empowerment, both in terms of the 'informal' activities in the KKs, and the more 'formal' approach of the APON programme (the latter is examined in more detail below). The KKs and provide a much-needed space for girls to do and to be, and the

⁵⁷ BEP MIS

⁵⁸ BEP Research and Monitoring Unit

training programmes allow them to explore greater possibilities of doing and being. The expansion also reflects the success of and demand for the programme. Attendance figures show that about 70% members turn up – which is a higher figure than most formal education programmes can manage, and an indication of how the programme is valued by the members. In the past, each centre was to be open for three years, but continued demand has led to a rolling enrolment – older girls women move on or move away, and potential new members are queuing at the door to take their places. The planned expansion is a combination of extending the life of centres where there is a large demand and opening new centres in areas previously unserved.

Visits to the KKs and discussions with members, APON graduates, parents and ADP staff confirm that the ADP is a valuable and valued component of BEP.

d. The APON Programme

The TORs ask for an assessment of the effectiveness of the APON programmes in terms of improvement of welfare, developing opportunities for full- and part-time employment, and bringing about changes in the lifestyle and general well-being of poor rural women. The contents of the APON programmes – for girls and for boys – are designed to increase the knowledge of the social, health and legal matters⁵⁹ that is fundamental to the welfare of adolescent girls and women. The three main areas of activity are awareness raising, leadership development and livelihood training.

Unlike most other 'gender' projects, APON has moved beyond the prevailing view that gender is a women's issue, and through APON boys is extending this vital information to those who have the power to support the empowerment of girls and women – the adolescent boys who will become the husbands and fathers of the future. The APON (B) programme was designed to create an understanding about the issues that adolescent girls have to deal with, and to complement the girls' programme. The formal education system, if it addresses gender issues at all, works to reinforce the stereotypes – through its curriculum, through its differential treatment of boys and girls in school, and through its channelling the children into stereotyped roles. APON challenges these stereotypes, and encourages reassessment of them by both girls and boys. The appraisal team particularly welcomes the introduction of APON (B).

Various studies indicate that the APON programme is indeed improving the welfare and well-being of adolescent girls, and during the field visit focus-group discussions with adolescents and adolescent leaders and supervisors threw up various examples, such as:

- girls managing to persuade parents (their own and the parents of friends) against plans for early marriage,
- advising a friend against getting involved in a risky situation with an admirer,
- advising an older married sister on contraceptive measures,
- convincing parents that their planned income generation activities were both feasible and socially acceptable
- persuading a father to convince neighbours he was doing the right thing to let his daughter attend a KK
- being allowed to continue their education because of the (modest) earnings from the APON programme
- informing elders on the laws relating to early marriage and dowry
- ... and having the confidence to talk to their elders about such things

More detailed examples are given in the case studies in the 'bringing about changes' section below. Observations made by the Appraisal Team indicate that even if the adolescents do not

⁵⁹ details in BEP IV proposal, and in UNICEF's APON *Kishori Abhijan*

manage the financial independence that comes with paid employment, these girls are learning to look the world in the eye, and acquiring the confidence necessary to challenge many of the inequities in society.

The ADP, in line with BRAC's overall approach, is actively consultative and participatory in terms of deciding the content of the programmes. Girls' preferences are noted and incorporated where possible. The same is being done with APON (B). However, a preference-based approach is one that could typically reinforce socially-constructed inequalities – to make an informed choice or rejection; you need to know what the possibilities are and to be in an environment where those choices are permissible. For example, in APON for girls (and KKs) dancing features prominently in those areas where this is culturally acceptable, while APON (B) is planning to include more outdoor games – preferences stated by the girls and boys respectively. It is useful for BRAC to consider to what extent it might be reinforcing cultural stereotypes, and to what extent it can stretch the boundaries of those stereotypes to further increase the empowerment and options available to both girls and boys.

The content of the APON programmes is valued not only by participants and adolescent leaders, but also by parents and teachers. Both the parents in the field-visit focus-group discussions and the staff at the school hosting the APON boys training suggested that teachers should know more about the topics covered in the APON courses. Parents especially felt that schools should cover such issues as changes to the body during adolescence, not because of embarrassment on their part, but because of their own lack of knowledge of the subject.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team suggests that while BRAC cannot cover all schools, they could help familiarise secondary school teachers in training at government colleges with the materials by presenting a full set of materials to the PROMOTE Resource Centres (there is one in each government TTC), and brief PROMOTE Programme Liaison Officers (PLOs) on their use and objectives. PLOs would then be able to disseminate this information amongst PROMOTE fellows, and all Resource Centre users. Materials could also be made available to Primary Training Institutions.*

e. Earning Opportunities

The Economic Lifeskill Project (or 'APON II'), a sub-component of APON, developed from the APON Livelihood training⁶⁰. It has proved difficult to place the girls in part- or full-time employment for a variety of reasons, including the general shortage of paid employment opportunities in rural areas, security issues make it difficult for girls to enter the job market, girls who are continuing their education are only available for part-time work and such posts are very limited, and employers are asking for minimum educational qualifications at a level higher than most girls have attained.

ADP has been monitoring the situation, and acknowledging and addressing these issues is now focussing – through APON II – on developing economic awareness in general, rather than targeting what have proved to be inaccessible or unavailable employment prospects. The main challenge seems to be of getting adolescent girls into – if not long-term employment – at least income-generating activities to keep them from poverty. This course is now being piloted and new materials are being developed (in consultation with selected adolescents, Unicef, and artists and script-writers), and focuses on developing general business awareness and skills, problems and principles, with the intention of making the adolescents – in the absence of formal employment opportunities – self-sufficient.

⁶⁰ details given in BEP IV proposal, 2003

Recommendation: The Team recommends close monitoring/ tracer studies of APON II to assess what impact it has on the earning opportunities of the participants.

The successful components of the Livelihood Training – such as the photographers – will be retained and strengthened.

Interviews with four of the girls who had received training in photography indicate that this is a component that could be successfully replicated on a much larger scale (there are many villages in which no-one owns a camera). These girls are paying their own way, buying their own clothes, contributing to the family economy, and have developed a remarkable independence. Having managed to repay their loans in between 3 –6 months (rather than the one-year planned), they are now earning between Taka 750 – 1000 per month. One girl has got her own bike to allow her greater mobility in 'assignments'. They report that the greatest demand is for individual portraits.

Recommendation: Within the ADP livelihood skills programme, the current model of camera has a 38mm lens, which is good for group photographs and events, but not for portraits. As the greatest demand seems to be for individual portraits, there should be a study to check this. If this is the case, then the Appraisal Team recommends that a different model of camera should be used – either 50mm or more, or a compact camera that can switch between wide angle and portrait mode.

ADP has created thousands of part-time posts for adolescent girls, and hundreds of full-time ones⁶¹, but beyond that success has been limited. A recent study⁶² shows that a large number of BRAC graduates are employed within BEP, but only 1% in BDP, and 1% outside BRAC. Most of these are adolescent girls employed within ADP or pre-primary schools. Their earnings are low (74% of those interviewed earn up to Taka 300 per month), but enough to contribute to continuing their own education, or to support other family members, and enough to enhance their self-esteem. In addition, their jobs make girls and young women visible in the community, and the jobs help create an acceptance of the idea of adolescent girls and women as part of the paid labour force.

The ADP model is extremely cost-effective, and has the added advantage of involving adolescent girls as both implementers and beneficiaries of the programme.

BDP has recently designed a new Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) initiative. Under this scheme, BDP has formed 2848 village organisations with 67,283 adolescent members. As of July 2003, Tk. 124,004,836 has been disbursed in loans under ELA. ELA is also exploring the possibility of employment of some 200 adolescent girls (so far, 50 have been recruited). The evolution of ELA could have long-term implications for strengthening links with ADP.

Recommendation: As ADP has been so successful in creating employment opportunities within its own programme, and as the world beyond BEP is not yet ready or able to accommodate these girls in large numbers, the Appraisal team recommends that ADP further strengthens links with other BEP components (e.g. offer 'tutor-training' and with PBE, get good SSC graduates to give tutorial support to BRAC graduates in secondary schools) or BDP in order to explore the possibilities of more part- and full-time placements within BRAC. Longer-term strategies should be developed to help the girls find paid employment opportunities in the world beyond BRAC.

⁶¹ BEP IV proposal, 2003

⁶² BRAC monitoring unit report, March-April 2003 (translated summary)

Recommendation: The Appraisal Team also recommends that BRAC explores the possibility of linking with the forthcoming GoB / ADB-funded 'Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project'⁶³, which will run concurrently with BEP(2004-2009). This might not only help create further employment opportunities, but could also provide a further source of funding for the programme.

f. Bringing about Changes

The TORs ask for an examination of 'the changes in the lifestyle and general well-being of poor rural women, thus showing linkages between education and poverty reduction'.

With those paid by the ADP, the difference is visible. A focus-group discussion with KSs in Sherpur was a vision of happy, confident girls and young women, all of whom were wearing new shalwar kameez bought from their earnings. While the money they earn is not much, it is enough to give them a sense of well-being – one that comes from having money in your pocket and the knowledge that you are valued enough for someone to pay you for what you do.

Both UNICEF⁶⁴ and ADP⁶⁵ have gathered case-study information on girls who are part of the programme, and there seems to be growing evidence that the programme is having a positive impact in the lives of the girls. Some examples drawn from the source mentioned above, and from interviews with girls / women during the Mission's field visits are given in the box...

Impact of ADP: some case studies

The earnings of one Kishori Supervisor (KS) in Nalitabari allowed her and her sister to pay their exam fees, and to help with the cost of medical treatment for her mother. Her father now involves her in family decisions, and she reports on the respect she has earned in the local community as a result of having an SSC (the only female in the community to have one), and of having a job.

A KS in Jamalpur says that her family now eats three meals a day with the help of her income. There is no son in the family, and she has detected an increased respect from her family having shown that she can contribute, and they are now in no hurry to marry her off. She reports: '...people ... say that a girl from a poor family is playing a key role to move up her family'.

One girl who married at 15 was abandoned – along with her new-born son – by her husband, who had taken another wife while she was pregnant. Her parents wanted nothing to do with her, but once she got a job as a KS her parents welcomed her (and her income) back. From being an unwanted and abandoned wife and mother, her job has helped her to become confident and at the time of the case-study she was planning to attempt the SSC for the third time.

One young woman from a poor, landless family in Bagatipara was teaching in a BRAC pre-primary school when she heard about the possibility of the photography training programme. Her parents initially opposed the idea, worried about the idea of taking out the Taka 3000 loan, and about her moving about in the community. However, she gave them details of another girl's success, and the parents gave in. She now dreams about setting up her own studio.

Two sisters in the Sherpur region, having completed APON training, were still in school when their family went through a 'financial crisis'. Threatened with being withdrawn from school, they set about generating their own income. One started offering tailoring services, the other photographs. This sister had heard about the success of others in the ADP programme, and her family having been rich enough before their 'crisis' to have a camera, she took the initiative herself, without the training. Both sisters have since both been part of the pilot APON II project, which they say was very useful in giving them ideas for running their businesses. For example, the photographer, after learning about supply and demand, dropped the price of her photos from Taka 20 to Taka 15. Both are now earning enough to cover the costs of their own education and more.

Through UNICEF's APON Kishori Abhijan, ADP has formal links with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), and through this BRAC and the government are moving towards the same goals. A field visit to the district representative of the Department of Women (DoW) indicated an open willingness to work with BRAC, but a lack of information both from

⁶³ TORs for PLCEHP, GoB, 2003

⁶⁴ UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, n.d

⁶⁵ case histories collected by ADP, n.d

government headquarters and from BRAC itself. Although this government officer had visited two Ks, she seemed unaware of the scope of the ADP and called for more communication between BRAC and GoB at a local level. She particularly mentioned the GoB's 'National Plan of Action against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children including trafficking'⁶⁶, but she did not seem to know that this was part of the content of the APON programme. If this lack of knowledge is widespread, BRAC should take initiatives locally to bring such government people on board.

It should be noted that both parents and children from poor families have unrealistically high expectations of education, and there should be concern for the disillusion that may set in once they realise that education – within the formal education system at least – is not going to solve all their problems, nor even necessarily alleviate poverty. For this reason, it is essential that training such as that offered under ADP is offered to give young people the ammunition they need to tackle those things that perhaps *can* be changed – such as reproductive health, family size, violence, and dowry demands.

3.4 Continuing Education Programme

Initiatives within the Continuing Education Programme support the establishment of a lifelong learning society as called for in EFA (p15). The Gonokendros and the many services within them provide opportunities for communities to continually apply and upgrade their literacy skills. Furthermore, the community partnership aspect of this programme is in keeping with BRAC's preference for supporting and empowering communities.

The first Gonokendros or Union Libraries were established in 1995. Their primary objective was to create access to reading materials in the community. The more ambitious challenge, however, was to develop the libraries into self-financing sustainable centres where stimulating events such as discussions and debates take place, with cultural activities, and courses based on the needs of the community. Most of the Continuing Education Programme activities are taking place in connection to these institutions. It has been proposed to change the name of Union Libraries to Library and Multipurpose Community Centres (LMCC) in an effort to better reflect their spirit and function. The Appraisal Team appreciates this proposal but wants to go one step further and recommend instead using the Bangla name Gonokendro. This seems to reflect well the activities in these resource centres, and can be developed further as an international "trademark". Actually for most foreigners it is easier to label and learn Gonokendro compared to the complex abbreviation of LMCC.

Recommendation: It has been proposed to change the name of Union Libraries (UL) to Library and Multipurpose Community Centres (LMCC). For several reasons, it is recommended instead to use the Bangla concept 'GONOKENDRO' throughout as a "trademark" for these resource centres.

a. The Continuing Education Programme examined in the context of its contribution to creation of a "learning society"

Main outputs of the Gonokendros and related activities

Before discussing selected aspects of the Continuing Education Programme it is necessary to give a brief summary of output and scope of the programme. Further programme description is found in the BEP proposal, and will not be repeated here. BRAC is keeping an impressive and

⁶⁶ MoWCA, 2002

thorough account of the activities, for instance in the Gonokendros, based on registers filled in by the librarians on a day-to-day basis. As of June 2003:

- There were 648 Gonokendros in addition to 73 women libraries, and 31 small libraries, covering 661 Unions⁶⁷.
- There are almost 329 thousand library (or centre) members, whereof 46% are women
- In average 54 readers are visiting each Gonokendro every day, and 10 books are issued.
- Books have been issued to more than 13000 poor students (whereof 65% females).
- 91% of the Gonokendros have children's corners with drawing materials, books, magazines, games.
- 70 Gonokendros are equipped with computers (1 to 3 computers in each, some with printers). Basic computer courses are held for various groups, 10 IT fairs have been organised.
- The Gonokendros are inviting the local public to drawing competitions and essay writing, presentation and recitation.
- Gonokendros organise socio-cultural activities, reading forum, publish magazines, wall newspapers and so on. Music instruments are available in many Gonokendros.
- The Gonokendros have in several instances taken the initiative to celebrate important occasions and there are reported media-care events, rural fairs and so on.
- The Gonokendros are involved in mobilisation and selection of Gonokendro members to take part in skill training provided free of charge by Government programs.
- The Gonokendro in many cases provides room and other facilities for training of different sorts.

This is not the place to analyse in detail the requirements of an "informed, knowledge-based and learning society for all"⁶⁸. Leave it to say that elements constituting of such societies would be composed and developed in relation to background site-dependent variables, and not least needs and wants of the population. It is the opinion of the Appraisal Team that the BRAC Continuing Education Programme contains inputs and approaches which not only will assist the targeted localities to become learning societies, but will also contribute with new knowledge about modalities and processes that will have the potential to constitute models for other localities, and even other countries.

The fact that any approach towards developing a learning society will need to take into account local specific differences, gives BRAC an advantage compared to many other stakeholders, because of the decentralised implementation structure of BRAC, with representatives at the grass root levels, as well as BRAC's inclination to monitor and follow up activities in detail.

Over the years many different approaches to local "resource centres" have been tried out, in Bangladesh as well as in other countries. One of the main problems has often been lack of institutional and financial sustainability. The tendency has been that centres have been inserted as some alien organism in localities, with no energy to survive when external assistance has been terminated. BRAC seems to have found solutions to some of these problems. BRAC is emphasising on local ownership and responsibility of the Gonokendros to the extent that the local societies have invested considerable amount of money in specific Trust Funds, which function as security for financial viability.

The local people taking part in establishment of the Gonokendros, the trust fund contributors, and the most active Gonokendro participants most likely will not represent the poorest groups of the locality. But they are considered important to establish the centres and make them sustained. Among the users of the services there are many who belong to poorer sections, including:

⁶⁷ Information from PACE: *Facts and Figures at a Glance: As of June 2003*

⁶⁸ EFA, NPA, p. 24

- The Gonokendros welcome all groups of people, there is no segregation in terms of economy or status.
- Mobile libraries reach out to women living too far away or who are not allowed to leave their house.
- Poor students are paying reduced fee for lending schoolbooks.
- One objective is to reach illiterate persons with information and know-how via CD-ROM and audio-visual materials.
- There are provisions for lower fees for IT-courses for girls/women, poor and disabled.
- The Information and Multimedia Presentations reach out to people at large as long as they are able to meet.
- BRAC school children are selected in accordance to poverty criteria. When former BRAC students visit the Gonokendros one knows that these are recruited among the poor sectors of the population.

But the Gonokendros are also instrumental due to the fact that information is an important input to economic activity. The libraries and reading rooms provide such information. As mentioned earlier, the Gonokendros are strongly involved in Skill Training Programs for youths, and the physical infrastructure is there for courses and other related work. Introduction of IT technology is also intended to benefit economic activities at local level.

In addition to the economic and material aspects of poverty, BRAC provides many services aiming at fighting cultural poverty which has a value in itself and which also often can be considered an entry point for eradication of economic poverty. The Gonokendros are instrumental in reducing the cultural gap between those who have and those who have not. In the Gonokendros, the Appraisal Team was told the poor people find a place where they are considered equal, where they have the same rights, where they can receive training, knowledge, skills. They can come in contact with a world of the written word, and even modern technology as computers. Women, who are not allowed to leave their homes, are reached with mobile libraries.

One should also mention that for many rural people the BRAC Gonokendros would be among the first "formal institutions" they are involved with and even become members of. Rural people getting used to planning, budgeting, reporting, decision-making in general, taking account of various interests and working towards common goals might represent an important positive aspect of the Gonokendros.

The Gonokendros are, however, relatively new. There are many positive intentions connected to their development, and BRAC is professional enough to follow-up and assess the actual role of Gonokendros in poverty eradication.

b. A comment on special activities.

The efforts of BRAC to introduce modern technology into the countryside of Bangladesh, represented by the computers in Gonokendros, will be followed closely by many international observers as this is testing out of ideas that can have great implication for south-south exchange of information. There exist other projects where computers are tested out in rural contexts in Bangladesh (and for instance in India), but BRAC seems to be the first NGO in the country with a considerable number of machines in operation, and as usual BRAC invents exciting socio-economic mechanisms to attain sustainability and local ownership. The degree of utilisation of these computers for many different beneficiary groups, the systems of financing that are planned and implemented, and the thorough testing out in practice (there are already 70 computers installed and in use as of June 2003), is indeed impressive and guarantee, at least to a large extent, the success of this part of the programme.

With introduction of modern means of media into the rural areas of Bangladesh, BRAC is recommended to keep an open eye on the quality of the messages provided. Internet and CD-games, for instance, will provide contents that illiterate people not necessarily are trained to comprehend or have the necessary distance to. Some sort of protection, weeding, or "fire-wall" could be needed in relation to media brought to local people. CD-games for children including raw violence, sex and crime should not be allowed, because this is harmful to the children and because the reputation of the Gonokendros will be affected.

Another very important part of the programme, which needs special mentioning, is the Mobile Libraries. Again there are a number of simple, but well-planned socio-financial mechanisms invented and in place so that a system of provision of reading material will be secured – to women who are not allowed to go out from their compounds, and to old people or the disabled.

Conclusions: There is no doubt that the Gonokendros observed during appraisal are filling very significant functions in terms of developing "learning societies". According to the AT's observations, these institutions are already functioning as resource centres and meeting places in the localities, and in the areas visited there were no other similar services available.

As a part of their contribution to develop learning societies the Gonokendros seem to have potentials to reduce both economic and cultural poverty. It is difficult to measure these contributions and cost-efficiency calculation is likely not feasible. The BRAC cost input to each Gonokendro is relatively limited, and most of the expenses will be paid back as part of incomes from training fees and renting out of the rickshaws.

Many indicators related to development of the Gonokendros show that they are satisfying local information and cultural needs and aspirations. The fact that 570 locally based Gonokendro Thrusts are already formally formed guarantee to a large extent the local ownership and economic feasibility of the Gonokendros.

c. Practicability of Range of Services of Gonokendros.

The Appraisal Team is asked to determine to what extent it is practical for the programme to reach a wider audience through mobile libraries, introduction of IT services, recasting the Gonokendros as multipurpose community centres providing a range of services, as well as being centres for all kinds of information exchange.

Based on the information obtained by the Appraisal Team, and inspection made during fieldwork, these Gonokendros operate efficiently. There is a good communication between librarians and members. New activities are introduced and tested out. The Appraisal Team had the opportunity to join the monthly meeting of 16 Gonokendro librarians in Mymensingh. These meetings function as a meeting point for librarians, and they reported to, and received information from the BRAC HQ representative who led the meeting. The general impression was that activities were going on well in these centres, but also that the librarians felt free to report on problems and challenges faced. All of the librarians reported increase in number of visitors to the Gonokendros since the last meeting one month ago.

The fact that the members are paying their membership fees and that the number of members is increasing confirm that Gonokendros are satisfying local needs. Other indications are that Gonokendros are receiving gifts from the locality, in terms of crop and other donations. The most important indicator is however, that the number of users of the different services provided is increasing.

One aspect of the question of whether the large range of activities at the Gonokendros is practical is related to the workload of the librarians. Normally the librarians are local women, given training and refresher courses by BRAC and employed by the Gonokendro Board. The

workload of the librarians is increasing as the Gonokendros are growing both in terms of providing traditional library services and in involvement in many other activities as indicated above. The user groups are different and represent different needs and services. So far the introduction of modern PC technology in the Gonokendros has not benefited the work of librarians, for instance so that they can keep records by applying computers. BRAC is however working on this matter.

Recommendation: A special independent review to be made of the Gonokendros after 2-3 years of the BEP programme. One aim of this review would be to identify areas of concentration. But it should also assess co-operation with other NGOs and the government. Further actions and decisions to be taken based on the findings of this review.

d. Co-operation with GoB Departments in the area of Skills Development Training.

According to agreement BRAC has an annual quota of 9550 participants to the Skills Development Training Programme coordinated by Ministry of Youth and Sport, Directorate of Youths. The Gonokendros role in this training is to inform members, assist in the selection and send application to the government. The Appraisal Team met with participants from courses in fish cultivation and livestock who gave an expression of having benefited from the training, but some individuals indicated that their problem was lack of funds to apply the knowledge gained. The Appraisal Team also met with district government representative in Mymensingh. Similar training courses had, according to this informant, been implemented since 1978, and was characterised as useful. The government provides loans to selected young persons finalising the courses.

Statistics provided by PACE show that from 1999 to June 2003, a total of 12296 youths (40.4% women) had been selected by BRAC to take part in skill programs financed by the government. Participation has been most frequent at poultry and livestock courses. 89.6% of the participants in the sewing/tailoring courses are females. Only one of 30 Gonokendro members in the entrepreneurship course was female.

The appraisal did not assess how the courses were marketed among Gonokendro members, and what kind of aspirations the training created among them. Skill and knowledge development is to some extent a value in itself. But, if the participants are not given some sort of follow-up, participants could get a sense of broken promises, and that would be unfortunate.

The Skill Programme covers agriculture and rural development, fishery development, crop production, and animal husbandry. One would think that there would be basis for exchange of information and experience between the PACE and rural development programmes of BRAC which are involved in these activities on a regular basis. The appraisal mission tend to think that such exchange is taking place at local level, but would in addition also like to see it mentioned in the programme document as the multi-activity character of BRAC is thought to be one of its comparative advantages.

Conclusion: The Gonokendros seem to be instrumental in assisting their members to obtain skill training, financed by the government. According to information obtained by the AT, this programme has a large potential, and represents one example of good cooperation between BRAC and the government. But little is known about the content of the training, the training methodology applied and how the training is followed up by assistance to participants.

Recommendation: (1) In collaboration with the relevant governmental offices to take initiatives to study the Skill Development Training Programme, its content and

methodology, in terms of finding out in general its appropriateness for Bangladesh's youths of today and how the training is contributing to self-employment in particular.

(2) CEP to indicate how PACE can benefit from contact and exchange of experience with other BRAC divisions and sectors, dealing with, for instance competence development in the same fields.

e. Gender

It is evident that CEP is taking gender issues very seriously. As mentioned above, special efforts are already implemented or planned to reach out to women, and in particular to poor and marginalised women. The statistics presented is gender sensitive. One of the most powerful aspects of BRAC in this sense is the many well-qualified female teachers, librarians, and other staff working in BRAC-related activities. The impact of their functions as role models in Bangladesh is probably very significant.

The Appraisal Team has some concerns for the librarians. These are employed by Gonokendro Board at local level, but are trained by BRAC, and BRAC is also assisting in selection and institutionalising the employment. To some extent they are the mediators between traditional culture and values and the modern world. They are most likely considered by local people as responsible for what is going on in the Gonokendros. At the same time their workload is becoming harsher with the growth and spread of services, for many different groups of people.

Conclusion: The CEP will provide services that will reach and probably empower women in rural areas. Gender aspects seem to be mainstreamed in the plans and implementation.

Recommendation: *BRAC to continually assess in particular the workload and other challenges faced by the librarians, to prevent them being exploited and exhausted.*

f. Capacity Building

Development and diffusion of knowledge seems to penetrate BRAC's work at most levels. As a "learning organisation" it is well aware that building capacity is vital, both among own staff and other stakeholders in the projects. Training and refresher training, meetings, and workshops are planned and undertaken in a professional way, either in the TARCs, in Gonokendros or where needed.

The CEP is involved in establishing new institutions in rural areas – the resource centres, as well as in bringing in high-level technology to these localities. Training can solve many of the challenges these activities bring. The Gonokendro Board is developed from scratch into an important local institution with its own Trust Funds, with employers (the librarians) and with responsibility of running multifunctional centres. Most Gonokendro Boards will face new challenges and have to take different forms of decisions than they are used to before. The fact that Gonokendro also will attract people who seek political, personal or economic power, adds to their challenges and increase the need for capacity building.

The appraisal has not been in a position to assess the training provided to the librarians. These people, mostly women, are involved in many different activities, whereof library work is only one. They are for instance central actors in the selection of youths to participate in the Skill Development training program. What kind of competence is required for this selection, and are the librarians trained accordingly? Or, should this be the responsibility of the Youth Committees? Experimentation is needed and one has also to consider what the best alternative is; local specific or uniform solutions covering all Gonokendros. It is important that sufficient resources in terms of budget and personnel are set aside to follow-up these questions.

Conclusion: Competence development is strongly needed in many areas of work with Gonokendros, computers, and mobile libraries, not least because these are new arenas of operation. The approach needs to be flexible and changing in accordance with the felt needs, and involve staff at all levels as well as other related personnel.

Recommendations: BRAC to assess the situation in individual Gonokendros, and where needed provide more training, study-tours or other inputs to strengthen and inform the Gonokendro Board members and other resource people related to the Gonokendros. Appropriate budget should be made available for this.

g. HIV/AIDS

According to UN/WHO, between 20-30,000 persons are HIV infected in Bangladesh, and due to spread of sexually transmitted diseases and high mobility of the population and migration Bangladesh is considered to be a HIV risk zone. The health department of BRAC is working specifically on HIV/AIDS related issues, and the appraisal mission got the impression that mainstreaming of the HIV issue in BRAC has still not taken place.

The appraisal wants to stress the importance of the Gonokendros as multimedia and resource centres contributing to this work. As physical arena for meetings, for reaching out to the general public, the role of the Gonokendros are potentially very significant. Awareness building in terms of making brochures and books available, introducing debates, invite creative writing on related subjects etc. are good options. Linking HIV-related messages (which could be developed by the Health Division) to the media programmes planned for PCs is another.

Within the ADP, The APON courses already include HIV/AIDS messages, and these messages are reaching a small, but important group of people.

j. Managerial Capacity

The BRAC reporting and management system for running CE activities seem to work efficiently, and this has been tested out and developed based on practical experience. The flow of information and reporting is channelled vertically both up and down in the BRAC hierarchy as well as horizontally at the same level. As an example of the latter is the institutionalised meeting of librarians with its sharing of news, ideas, experiences and problems. And the impression is that the structure of orders and advice also flow efficiently; from head office The Programme Head guides the Sector Regional Manager and then further down the structure via Regional Area Managers, Area Managers and Programme Organisers. There are no doubts that the organisation is characterised by a relatively strong internal discipline, compared to for instance voluntary NGOs found in Europe.

At the same time the organisation gives an impression that there are many possibilities to shortcut order and reporting lines. For visitors BRAC seem to be a functional, corporate, but at the same time living organism. At the end of the day what counts is the results, and the Appraisal Team does not doubt that BRAC delivers well in terms of quality and quantity.

The appraisal has studied routines developed for management and monitoring, and has seen part of these routines practiced in the field. To the extent the Appraisal Team can assess, the BRAC managerial system is running efficiently.

Conclusion: As far as the Appraisal Team can judge, an appropriate management system is in place to prepare BRAC for the CEP and implement it according to the intentions.
Quality / logistics

k. Cost-Effectiveness

There are several approaches to assess cost-effectiveness of Gonokendros and the services they provide. One the one hand there is the "input" or the investments made by BRAC and the Trust Fund. One the other is the "value" of the services for the beneficiaries; either in terms of what they achieve by the services or in terms of simply what they are willing to pay for them. One other is to compare the services provided by BRAC Gonokendros with alternative available service.

The Appraisal Team has been told that the last option is not relevant simply due to the fact that there are no other similar multipurpose service institutions available in the localities visited. Traditional institution issuing books to rural people are hardly found, apart from the Gonokendro. When adding the other services; reading room, children's corner, PCs etc. it is even more clear that there is only one place to find it, and comparison is not relevant.

The inputs from BRAC are roughly; costs for staff and administration, purchase of 1000 books and computers (but 50% of training fees are used to refund the computers). In addition BRAC provides furniture and a matching grant of 50,000 Taka. The community raises at least 30,000 Taka before the Gonokendro is opened and then at least additional 20,000 Taka in order to convert the local committee to a Trust. The community also contributes infrastructure (often unused government houses or rooms in secondary schools, provided free of charge). Members (and others) contribute other gifts.

The Gonokendros' incomes are interests from the Trust Fund, membership fees, and various sorts of training fees, mainly from the PC-related courses. Running costs are salary for librarians, and normal maintenance of the Gonokendro, repair of PCs etc.

The Mobile Libraries introduce interesting new approaches to economic sustainability. These services are established based on the income from the Gonokendros. Part of the concept is purchase of one rickshaw for transport of both the books and the librarian. When this is not in use in library transport, it is rented out in the locality, and income has in one place proved to pay the investment after two years time. Further income will finance running cost. PACE staff do think that need for transport will increase in the rural areas, and that BRAC this way is contributing to introducing the rickshaws in many villages.

Conclusion: The experience made so far is that the system is near to self-sufficient, with strong emphasis on local ownership and control. The Appraisal Team has never heard of similar achievements in any country.

3.5 Post-Primary Education

The Post-Primary education (PPE) component exemplifies the potential for joint ventures between NGOs and the formal education sector. The Appraisal Team was asked to assess the extent to which the interventions in secondary schools are consistent with GoB education policy and with BRAC's own vision of its long-term role in the education sector, and this is discussed in Section 2 of this report.

In this section, the main components of PPE are considered. It is worth noting that these components have been developed in close co-operation with highly-respected secondary schools in Dhaka. They supported BRAC in developing training materials, conducting training, and in giving BRAC staff access to their schools for classroom observations. In addition, development of the English component has been done in close liaison with GoB's ELTIP⁶⁹.

⁶⁹ More details on all of these developments can be found in BEP (2004-2009), pp 89-99.

As the findings – and related recommendations – for each sub-component differ, each part is analysed separately below. Of the three core curriculum subjects targeted, maths and English are included in the intervention because of the high failure rates in these subjects (data from the 125 schools receiving BRAC support from 22 Upazilas in 9 districts show that in 2002 a total of 6058 students failed in the SSC examination, of whom 3824 failed in English and 3383 in Maths). Science is included because it is frequently neglected in rural schools, thus disadvantaging students from rural areas.

a. Maths

Many students, and especially those in rural schools, have difficulty in passing the end-of-year and SSC exams in maths. The PPE intervention – through improving the quality of maths teaching – is designed to help all students in target schools, including BRAC graduates. A recent study of BRAC graduates in formal secondary schools⁷⁰ showed that secondary school teachers perceive BRAC students to be weak in maths and English, a view that is supported by an analysis of end-of-year exam results, with BRAC graduates generally getting (slightly) lower marks than the control group. Another study conducted this year⁷¹ with a much larger sample showed that 51% of BRAC graduates in the study failed the Class 6 maths exam, compared to 39% of the control group. BRAC graduates are obviously in need of more support in maths, and the Khan study showed that 79.4% reported difficulties with that subject (maths topped the league in terms of perceived difficulty).

PACE conducted a study with maths teachers which shows that they find over half the contents of the curriculum either ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ themselves, with the level of difficulty increasing through the grades, the content for classes 9/10 being rated as 72% ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’. The main focus of the training is therefore based on those areas which are ‘new’ components in the revised curriculum and which the teachers themselves have difficulty understanding.

An analysis of pre- and post-training results of 296 maths teachers who attended PPE training during the period *May-July 2003* shows that, in a test worth 30 marks, they moved from an average of about 8/30 marks pre-training to about 22/30 post-training indicating that teachers’ knowledge of their subjects had improved significantly.

However, during field-visit observations of three maths classes taught by teachers who had received BRAC training, it was not possible to see evidence of impact of training. Each class was teacher-dominated, with perhaps one or two of the ‘better’ students answering questions, and the others simply copying from the board. The content may have been more comprehensible as a result of subject-training, but as there was very little checking of students’ understanding this was impossible to assess. A follow-up visit to a PACE maths training workshop showed a traditional lecture-style class in progress. The programme has a large amount of time devoted to ‘demonstration’ lessons by trainees, but because of time constraints, the Team was not able to observe any of these. But judging by the classes observed their impact in changing methodology is as yet limited, indicating that more guidance is needed in the use of participatory methodologies and checking of students’ understanding. This would especially help benefit those students who are weak in the subject.

⁷⁰ Khan, 2002, BRAC Research and Evaluation Division

⁷¹ BRAC Monitoring Department, May 2003. This study is not available in English; the findings were summarised verbally.

b. English

Like maths, English is one of the most common causes of failure to get the SSC. A severe shortage of English specialists means that any teacher can be called on to teach the subject. The improvement of the teaching and learning of English is a government priority, as indicated by the fact that there have been two recent GoB secondary English language projects. ELTIP – the current GoB project – had originally planned to open 32 regional training centres, but only 16 ever became operational and some have since closed. Therefore, the remoter rural areas are not reached by ELTIP, but BRAC – with its extensive regional network and residential training centres – can reach almost any school.

As with maths, the intervention in English is designed to help all students in rural schools, including BRAC graduates. The Khan study referred to in the maths section above indicated that many BRAC graduates feel that English is difficult (about 50%), and it also indicates that BRAC graduates score slightly less than other students in English on average, and as with maths, the BRAC Monitoring Department study shows a 12% gap between the BRAC graduates and the control group in English, albeit with generally better results than with maths.

An analysis of pre- and post-training results of 186 English teachers who attended PPE training during the period May-June 2003 shows that, in a test worth 50 marks, they moved from an average of about 16/50 marks pre-training to about 28/50 post-training, indicating that teachers' knowledge of their subjects had improved significantly. The progress in English was good, but not as marked as with the maths teachers – which is hardly surprising given that English is a skills-based rather than a content-based subject. Results indicate that teachers need continued support in improving their language skills.

Field-visit observations of three English classes gave clear evidence of application of training (with mixed degrees of success). All three teachers used English almost all the time, and two set up pair work. The materials and programme for the English training have been studied carefully, and generally seem well-balanced and well-designed (an improvement on the original ELTIP materials on which they are based), and good follow-up observation sheets have been developed.

***Recommendation:** The Appraisal Team recommends that PPE consider ways of improving teachers' English language competence beyond the necessarily limited input in the PPE programme. Options for consideration could include some form of (district-level?) distance learning, the development of supplementary materials for the teachers, and a closer focus on the language needed to use existing NCTB materials. The Team further recommends linking PPE with Union Libraries and Kishori Kendros to advise on suitable English-medium materials that could be introduced to support English studies of secondary school students.*

c. Science

Most rural secondary schools do not have a science stream, and nor do they have science laboratories. Science is offered in more than 70% urban schools compared with less than 20% rural schools, showing another example of the urban / rural divide. There is anecdotal evidence to indicate that children in rural areas are actively discouraged from opting for science.

The PPE science training programme was being piloted at the time of the Appraisal Mission, and it is too early to comment on it in any detail, but discussion with the staff and observation of one training session with the pilot group indicates that it is well-focussed, and pre- and post-test results on the pilot group show good improvements.

d. Management

At present, non-government secondary schools and their SMCs have little accountability to the parents and the students, or to the government that funds 90% of salaries, and there is widespread lack of satisfaction with their performance. The Prime Minister has 'blamed the educational downslide on teachers and the bad management'⁷².

There are about 16000⁷³ non-government, or community secondary schools. BRAC has proven ability in building capacity at the field level, and is well-placed to support the government in its attempts to strengthen weak rural schools. PPE has started and perhaps more importantly in terms of accountability, BRAC is well able to mobilise communities, and could encourage more parental involvement in the functioning of the schools. Many parents of children in these underperforming schools are poor, and have low levels of literacy themselves. They are often not in a position to judge the quality of education provided (in many schools they are actually barred from the premises), and even if they know a school is failing, they cannot afford to send their child to a better school some distance away (girls are often over-represented in these poor schools because of the difficulties they face when travelling outside their local area).

PPE has devised a 3-day training course for Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers and members of SMCs of non-Government secondary schools, during which each school drafts an action plan for implementation, and after which BRAC offers follow-up support. The focus is on the development of management and supervision capabilities within the school. While BRAC offers follow-up as an important component of PPE, it is vital that school management members are able to conduct follow-up themselves from within.

In field-visit interviews with Headteachers and members of SMCs who had received training, the importance of subject-training of teachers was seen as paramount, and it seems that management is happy to blame the teachers for under-performance rather than accept responsibility for it themselves.

Recommendation: *As the success of the management component is vital to the success of other component, the Appraisal Team recommends that PPE considers lengthening and strengthening the planned training of management staff. This would help ensure that school management members are fully aware of their potential management roles, fully informed of the objectives of the subject-based training and are able to conduct supervision effectively.*

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that PPE supplement the work with management members with more links with parents so that parents know what they have a right to demand for their children's education, and are able to lobby SMCs if they are not satisfied.*

e. Values education

One emerging component of PPE which was not fully detailed in the BEP plan, but was identified in the needs assessment exercise conducted with stakeholders in participating schools is that of promoting 'values' education and citizen building. This is in line with BEP's overall 'cross-cutting themes and issues'⁷⁴, and was identified in the 2001 MTR as an area that needed strengthening generally. A 6-day trial course was conducted in July 2003 and based on the experience gained a TOT course will be conducted in September, followed by training of teachers. While the Appraisal Team was unable to observe activity in this area, we are of the

⁷² Daily Star, 24.05.03

⁷³ BANBEIS, 2001

⁷⁴ BEP proposal, p. 31

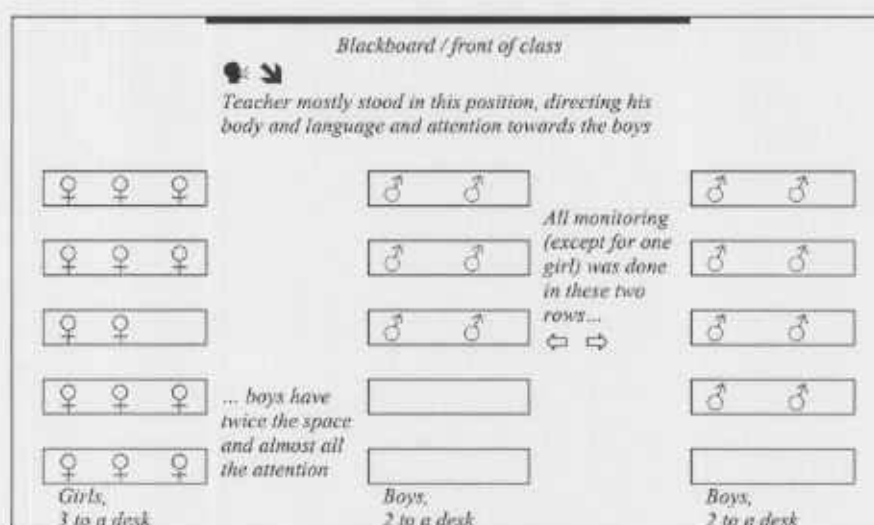
opinion that it is one of great importance to both students and teachers in Bangladesh secondary schools.

f. Gender

Girls at secondary level are specifically mentioned in the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA, this being one of the six overall goals (emphasis added):

'eliminating gender disparities in primary and *secondary* education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality'⁷⁵

The document goes on to stress that access to schools is not enough; action must also be taken in terms of the environment in which they learn, biases in teacher behaviour and in curricula and textbook bias.



Bias in teacher behaviour was clearly demonstrated in one lesson observed during the field visits, and this is shown in the picture above. Although there were equal numbers of girls and boys, the girls had been allocated only half the space and were working in cramped conditions, three to a desk. The (male) teacher excluded the girls by directing himself almost exclusively towards the boys. With this physical bias in terms of space allotted, and in terms of who was included within the teacher's gaze, the boys had twice the space and almost all the attention. Although unequal treatment of girls is not always as marked as this, experience has shown that it is not uncommon. Other examples of gender bias in schooling have been well-documented. BRAC's own gender policy⁷⁶ gives as its own objective (the first of two main objectives) 'To integrate a GAD/Sustainable Development approach in all programmes, projects and policies and ensure gender equitable outcomes'. At present, PACE does not have specific or explicit plans for addressing gender inequalities in secondary education, but there is a demonstrated need for it.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team strongly recommends that PPE develop a gender policy for the programme overall, and for all sub-components, the overall objective being to help ensure the achievement of gender equitable outcomes in target*

⁷⁵ World Education Forum (2000)

⁷⁶ BRAC Gender Resource Centre, 1998. p. 12

schools. Linked to this should be an appraisal of all PPE training materials and programmes for possible gender bias in language, male-female ratio of participants, and methodology

g. Technical / Professional Capacity

There is a serious shortage nationally of qualified English teachers, as most people with a good level of English seek high-paid jobs in urban areas. BRAC has little direct control over this, but it should be taken into account in plans for both primary and secondary education.

4. Prospects and Challenges in Merging BRAC's and other NGOs' NFPE with the Formal Primary Education System

4.1 Introduction

For the NFPE system to become a cohesive part of the primary education system in Bangladesh to achieve EFA goals constitutes a huge and complex issue that is riddled with many constraints, challenges and a fair degree of unpredictability. The realization of this aspiration depends on a set of dynamics and conducive conditions that need to be in place. While a thorough examination of the mechanics of achieving this objective warrants a setting-up of a joint GoB/NGO Think Tank, the Appraisal Team has identified some key critical conditions that need to be reflected upon.

4.2 Prospects and Challenges

On paper, the National Plan of Action (NPA) II on the NFE sector clearly states, among other things, the goal to "develop a system of ensuring involvement, participation, coordination and sharing of responsibility between the government, NGOs and others in planning, managing and funding of NFE programmes" (MoPME, p.116). NPA II also states the need to "develop a nationally agreed core set of standards and indicators of quality in both the government and NGO and other NFE programs..." (MoPME, p.116). These goals are most appropriate, but the GoB has not made any movement to achieve these goals.

It is not quite clear what the TORs for this Appraisal mean on the issue of merging the two formal and non-formal "**systems**" into a "**unified**" system. It is unrealistic to have the two "**systems**" merged. What is realistic and possible is to merge the formal and non-formal "**programmes**" rather than the "**systems**". Furthermore, "merging" the formal and non-formal programmes into one "unified" programme should not be taken to mean developing a monolithic programme. Rather, what would be desirable is to merge the two programmes into one "cohesive" sector-wide programme that can operate with a set of common uniform standards for the provision of primary education. Such a cohesive programme can still have a diversity of service providers and a diversity of delivery modes under the umbrella of a close partnership between NGOs and GoB.

In order to merge the non-formal and formal programmes into a cohesive programme through appropriate mechanisms and modalities that will need to be devised, a number of developments have to occur and some strategic actions will need to be taken.

First, the mountain will not move without substantial changes taking place in GoB's perceptions, attitudes and vision on the role and contributions of NGOs in the primary education sector and how NGOs can work as "partners" rather than "sub-contractors" with the GoB. Many of the previous government sponsored projects in the education sector in which NGOs were involved as sub-contractors were poorly managed by the government and did not, by and large, produce the desired results⁷⁷.

A number of encouraging developments have begun to take place which have a good potential to bring about the desired change in GoB's perceptions, attitudes and vision. For example, if the on-going successful and productive partnership between BRAC and the GoB is fully recognized and valued by the central government, it has the potential of broadening the scope of the partnership and perhaps encourage the GoB to initiate partnerships with other key NGOs in the country. The high level of enthusiasm and support demonstrated by the local government

⁷⁷ Such projects in the past have included: (1) Facilitation Assistance Programme on Education; (2) Ex-Garment Workers Schools; (3) Hard to Reach Urban Poor Children; and (4) Adult Education Programme

authorities to BRAC's pre-primary school programme also have the potential of inducing a bottom-up demand/pressure on the government for extending the BRAC's partnership in other areas of the primary education sector. BRAC's success in fully resurrecting the 44 dysfunctional schools that were handed over to it by the government has hopefully sent a clear message to the government on the capacity and competence of BRAC as well as the demonstration of the successful application of some of the elements of the NFPE model to a formal primary school. The GoB decision making NFPE graduates eligible to sit for an examination for government scholarships is a positive signal from the government vis-à-vis the recognition of the NFPE. On a smaller scale, there have also been encouraging developments beyond primary level with positive and established government links and collaboration in a range of activities: in Post-Primary Education with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, in Continuing Education (skills training) with the Ministry of Youth, and in the Adolescent Development Programme with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs / Department of Women (APON / UNICEF Kishori Abhijan).

Second, the use of the terminology "non-formal education" needs to be dropped for a number of pragmatic and strategic reasons. This is not a mere academic discourse. The term NFPE is ambiguous and misleading causing considerable confusion in the minds of ordinary citizens as well as in the minds of those senior civil servants who are not educationists by profession. This confusion hinders their clear understanding and appreciation of what NFPE is all about. The term "non-formal education" was coined in the mid-70's in order to articulate and recognize the fact that a wide range of educational activities are in fact undertaken outside the government's education system, predominantly by civil society organizations. Under this academic conceptualization, the government system came to be known as the "formal" system and any other system outside of the government was categorized as "non-formal." The other salient differentiation between the two systems relates to the flexibility of the non-formal system versus the rigidity of the formal system. This terminology was never intended to imply a differentiation in the *quality* of education nor in the *organized and structured* form of education. Despite that, this nomenclature has created an impression in the minds of many that non-formal education is:

- informal (as different from nonformal)
- ad-hoc,
- unorganized,
- unstructured, and
- inferior or second class

Consequently, the terminology has unwittingly disguised the true nature of education provided under the non-formal mode. Some NGOs have attempted to tone down the negative connotation of the hyphenated term "non-formal" by writing it as one word, "nonformal."

In this context, if the nagging misinterpretations around BRAC's NFPE are exorcised, the essence of BRAC's NFPE has the following fundamental elements:

- What BRAC's NFPE delivers is **primary education**, let alone a quality primary education.
- Primary education delivered by BRAC is as "**formal**" (in the generic meaning of the word) as the primary education delivered by the government. It has a curriculum, trained teachers, refresher training for teachers, a class, a full cycle of Grade 1 to V of primary education, text books and other supplementary materials, timetable, teaching methodology, attendance registers, monitoring and supervision, parents' meetings, and school management committees. It is ironical to note that some of these formal features in NFPE are lacking in the "formal" primary education system.

- The major point of departure between the two systems is the **mode and mechanism**⁷⁸ of delivering primary education. Examples of this mode and mechanism use in non-formal education include the one-room school instead of several classrooms, having one cohort of children at a time completing the primary education cycle instead of having children in several different grades at the same time, and the flexibility in the organization and management of the programme. Needless to say, the flexibility feature is a proven strength of the programme.

Recommendation: *In the light of the above analysis, the Appraisal Team recommends that BRAC should rename its NFPE schools as "Primary Education Centres" or "BRAC Primary Education Schools". In doing this, it would serve a number of purposes. At the pragmatic level, the new term more accurately describes the product delivered and its venue – calling a spade a spade. At the strategic level, the new term will help the GoB to more readily understand, recognize and value the primary education provided by BRAC.*⁷⁹

Third, the donor partners can help in facilitating GoB/NGO partnership, especially in relation to their stated intention to support a sector-wide approach. However, convincing the GoB to adopt a sector-wide approach might be a long shot in the medium-term. In the meantime, there is room for the donor partners to play a nudging and dialoguing role with the GoB to facilitate a GoB/NGO partnership.

Recommendation: *The Appraisal Team recommends that, among other things, the donor partners, through their Local Education Consultative Sub Group, could play a brokering role in facilitating the setting-up a GoB/NGO Think Tank comprised of senior level officials from both sides to explore ways and means of merging the non-formal and formal programmes of education into a cohesive programme through a meaningful GoB/NGO partnership.*

Fourth, although the donors lost their battle in designing PEDP II as a sector-wide approach for primary education, there might still be a ray of hope in involving NGOs when it comes to the implementation of PEDP II. For example, given the fact that one of the PRIME initiatives of establishing pre-primary schools has proved to be highly popular and successful and enjoys the full support of the local government authorities, it is quite possible that the GoB may ask BRAC to implement the pre-primary schools component of PEDP II which has planned to support 15,000 pre-primary schools. Another area of partnership could include serving the ethnic minorities and hard to reach urban poor children for which BRAC could access PEDP's "Innovation Grants" which amount to \$15m. The Project Concept Paper for PEDP II dated June 2003⁸⁰ spells out the nature of the Innovation Grants as follows:

"A flexible fund of money to provide 'Innovation Grants' will be created to support practical and creative ways to enhance the quality of education for disadvantaged children and those living in poverty, especially those in urban areas and for children from minority communities. The fund will resource innovative programs based on collaboration between communities,

⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that when the "Open" universities in many countries around the world (including Bangladesh) emerged as an alternative mode and mechanism to the regular (formal) types of universities, they were not named as "Non-Formal" universities.

⁷⁹ The inclusion of all of BRAC's interventions/projects in the education sector (including NFPE) under the heading of "BRAC Education Programme" is a step in the right direction. Similarly, BRAC has not named its pre-primary schools as **non-formal** pre-primary schools.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, "Project Concept Paper: Second Primary Education Development Project", Dhaka, June 2003.

government and civil society. These grants will be awarded for new proposals, or for the continuation and expansion of existing innovations."

The materialization of the above conducive conditions could create possibilities for expanding the GoB/NGO partnership for merging the formal and non-formal programmes of primary education and improve the quality of primary education. In the medium to long-term, such a partnership could also create possibilities for BRAC to play the role of a professional resource for educational development in the country in close partnership with the government. In this way the government would benefit by utilizing BRAC's experience and expertise in teaching methodology, materials development, community mobilization, planning and management, and monitoring and supervision. BRAC University's emerging Institute of Education and Development could contribute to the PEDP's envisaged in-service training of 1.5 million teachers and other education personnel under PEDP II. Serving as a professional resource for the education sector in terms of sharing of information, ideas and best practices with the GoB is in line with BRAC's long-term vision.

4.3 Possible Future Scenarios for BRAC's Place and Role in the Education Sector

If the necessary conditions and dynamics alluded to above get into place over a foreseeable period of time, a number of possible scenarios may emerge for BRAC's place and role in the education sector. These scenarios with some overlap between each other will be gradual in emerging and should be viewed with caution and with a certain degree of unpredictability. The possible scenarios and their respective plausible time-frames can be encapsulated in the simplified format shown in the box on the following page.

Scenarios 3 and 4 represents BRAC's long-term vision of its role which was the subject of a recent discussion (January 2003) between BRAC and the representatives of BRAC's donor consortium. As a major thrust in this vision, BRAC envisages a gradual shift from its present position as a provider of basic primary education to that of operating as a Network of Education Resource Centres on a national and regional scale. Under this role, BRAC intends to work in such areas as community-based management of education, teacher training, curriculum development, and capacity building. As part of this progression, BRAC is in the process of setting up an Institute of Education and Development as part of BRAC University in order to institutionalize professional support for BRAC's education programme and offer assistance to the public sector and other programmes. According to the draft proposal for setting up the Institute, "at the initial stage, instead of developing a formal degree programme, the Institute will focus on "deliverables" related to improvement of pedagogy, quality of curricula and learning materials, assessment of learning, and management at school and system levels in primary and secondary education. Research-based dialogue and advocacy on key policy issues will be another area of attention". Another major element in BRAC's long-term vision include establishing BRAC primary schools in areas where there are no schools, with a view to turning them eventually into registered institutions eligible for government funding.

The Appraisal Team believes in the rationality, soundness and relevance of BRAC's long-term vision of its role in the education sector in Bangladesh if certain conducive conditions get into place. BRAC and its donor partners should periodically and collectively engage in a further reflection and analysis of the alluded and other possible scenarios.

Possible Scenarios for BRAC's Place and Role in the Education Sector	
Possible Scenarios (with some overlap between each other)	Plausible Time-Frame
<p>Scenario 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status quo as per the proposed BEP 2004-2009: Provider of primary education and continuing education, and continuing collaboration with the GoB in all the BEP sub-sectors. 	Short-Term*
<p>Scenario 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider of primary education and continuing education. Increased and expanded collaboration with the GoB. Possible involvement in the implementation of PEDP II: pre-primary schools, ethnic minorities, in-service training of primary school teachers, etc. 	Short-Term to Medium-Term*
<p>Scenario 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradual phasing out of the direct provision of primary education. A more formalized and structured partnership between NGOs and GoB for delivering a cohesive programme of primary education. Serving as a professional resource for the education sector through the instrument of its emerging Institute of Education and Development. In this role, BRAC could collaborate with URCs, PTIs, NAPE, NCTB, etc. 	Medium-Term to Long-Term*
<p>Scenario 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realization of a sector-wide programming in primary education. Virtual withdrawal of BRAC from providing primary education. Shifting to play a more focused role of a professional resource for strengthening professional capacity for educational development through BRAC's Institute of Education and Development and through a Network of Resource Centres. 	Long-Term

Short-Term: 5 Years; Medium-Term: 5 - 10 Years; Long-Term: 10 years and beyond

4.4 Rationale and Justification for Direct Project Funding by Donors for BRAC's BEP

BRAC's strong, sincere and transparent desire to work in partnership with the government in the national interest is long-standing and marked by a number of overtures made to GoB. Over the last few years, encouraging developments have taken place in BRAC's partnership with the GoB centred on the pre-primary schools and community schools. BRAC is keen to expand the parameters of this partnership. It is up to the government to respond and reciprocate.

If the conducive conditions for the merging of GoB's and NGOs' efforts in primary education do not materialize in the short to medium-term, with or without a sector-wide approach, due to government's inaction or/and unwillingness, NGOs should not become the sacrificial lambs at the hands of those donors who are aiming to support a government-led, sector-wide approach. If the good work done by BRAC's BEP under its present configuration does not continue to be supported fully in the short to medium-term, it will be an imprudent, short-sighted and counter-productive action. The bottom line for the donors' prime concern should be the delivery of effective and quality primary education, covering all groups of children. Donor partners need to take into account the uniqueness of a country like Bangladesh where the government's performance in the primary education sector leaves much to be desired and where there are large NGOs which play a critical role in complementing government's efforts in the education sector. BRAC is not only the largest NGO in Bangladesh, but the largest NGO in the world.

In the light of the shifting policies of some donor partners, there is a need to explore alternative financing mechanisms to support BRAC's BEP and the educational work of other NGOs. This task needs a study of its own⁸¹ that involves extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (donors, NGOs, government, etc.). One idea that is currently floating around is the pooling of donor's resources into a single financing mechanism for NGOs. The mechanics of operating such a financing mechanism need to be thought through very carefully.

In the light of the uncertainties on the merging of the GoB's and NGOs' programmes in primary education and what, at the present point in time, sounds like the remote possibility of achieving a sector-wide programming in primary education in the medium-term, the rationale and justification for the donors to fund BRAC's BEP under its prevailing configuration, which includes partnership with the GoB, continue to remain strong. The major elements of this rationale include the following:

- It is well recognized that BRAC's provision of primary education meets a felt need and complements the government's efforts. 20% of the children are not going to school and a third of those that attend drop out of the system early. This means that almost half of all children of school-going age are not getting basic education (estimated at between 5 to 8 million).
- Although in quantitative terms BRAC caters for "only" 1 million children representing 6.5% of enrolled children, BRAC's contribution is value-added in terms of providing primary education to the children of the very poor and disadvantaged, two thirds of whom are girls, and the better quality of education provided. Without BRAC's intervention, these children would have never received any education.
- BRAC provides primary education in the context of a holistic and integrated process of socio-economic development that involves community mobilization, community participation and community empowerment. Through this process, while the children receive primary education, the parents of the school children are involved in BRAC's other development

⁸¹ The European Commission has commissioned a study that is due to commence in October 2003 to explore the alternative funding mechanisms.

programmes such as micro-credit and health care; female members of the community serve as teachers and supervisors in BRAC schools; adolescent girls (graduates of BRAC schools) serve as teachers in BRAC's pre-primary schools and the remuneration they receive helps them with their continuing education at the secondary and college levels.

- Through its Education Support Programme, BRAC is also supporting and building the capacity of over 500 other NGOs in the country in initiating and running BRAC-modelled NFPE schools which currently number over 5,000.
- All of the components of BRAC's Education Programme, namely, NFPE, Adolescent Development Programme, Continuing Education Programme, and Post-primary Education are implemented under competent management and good governance.
- The prospects of the further deepening of partnership between BRAC and the GoB are promising. The results achieved so far in BRAC's partnership with the GoB are positive and encouraging. Under this partnership, the pre-primary schools that have been set up by BRAC are gaining increasing popularity and unequivocal support from the local government authorities and the government primary schools in 40 upazilas of 16 districts in the country. Similarly, the GoB is satisfied with BRAC's successful efforts in reviving the 44 dysfunctional community schools into well-functioning and well-performing schools.
- BRAC has successfully revived the 44 community dysfunctional schools that were handed over to BRAC by the GoB. In reviving these schools, BRAC has successfully applied the non-formal methods in a formal setting of the community schools. These schools start from pre-primary to Class V. The MoPME and the local government authorities have expressed their satisfaction with the functioning and performance of these schools. 96 more community schools have recently been handed over to BRAC.
- BRAC continues to be creative and innovative in all its development interventions, and these innovations are fed into the non-formal education system in the country. BRAC is keen to experiment and learn lessons from its innovations and experimentation. A learning culture is deeply embedded in BRAC. Any new initiative is invariably piloted first in a highly professional manner. In the words Ian Smillie, a well known Canadian NGO guru, "From the beginning, trial and error, experimentation and learning have been essential components of the BRAC approach... In BRAC learning and change are constant."⁸² Recent examples of innovations in the education programme include the Pre-Primary School model, Adolescent Peer Organized Network, and mobile libraries and IT services for continuing education.
- BRAC has served as a valuable resource for several countries in the area of NFPE. It has been engaged in South-South cooperation in building the capacity of several countries to replicate/adapt the BRAC NFPE model to their respective contexts. The countries that have benefited are Sierra Leone, Sudan, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, and most recently, Afghanistan.

⁸² Ian Smillie, *Words and Deeds: BRAC at 25*, BRAC, 1997. In the Introduction to this publication, Ian Smillie states that "I do not pretend to have captured the magnitude, the depth or the importance of BRAC, but I do hope this study will add to an understanding of what is widely regarded to be one of the most dynamic development organizations of the late 20th century."

5. Overall Conclusions on BEP (2004-2009)

In relation to the BEP overall proposal, the Appraisal Team believes it is important to note that BEP (and the other BRAC initiatives) are firmly rooted in a process of integrated development. As such BEP cannot be appraised purely as a provider of discrete and disconnected educational services. Each part of the programme has logically and organically led to the next. The programme is a rare combination of logistical precision at the level of service delivery and a constant drive to push beyond the constraints of 'what currently is' and delve into the realm of 'what might be'.

BRAC as a learning organization has structures and processes in place both to find out what is going on in the field, to analyse the problems as well as to take remedial action.

The day-to-day follow-up by "line departments" is normally the most important monitoring system in organisations. Some of these have been described above as part of management and reporting, they are also described in detail in programme documents, appraisals and evaluations and will not be further elaborated upon here. The impression of the appraisal mission is that these are functioning well and are under continuous improvement.

The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC undertakes studies on different stages of the programme and can also take initiatives to undertake thorough research on for instance impact of BRAC related activities. Research and evaluation proposals are discussed in BRAC, and findings are reported and presented in meetings. In general, it is quite evident that highly qualified and deeply devoted personnel are performing good quality work, contributing to the continuous work of improving the organisation's achievements.

The proposed BEP (2004-2009) is well-conceived, well-planned, and well articulated. The Appraisal Team has made recommendations for consideration at both the programmatic and capacity⁸³ levels. It has confidence in BRAC's overall technical, professional, managerial, and monitoring capacity to implement BEP. These capacities can be further enhanced by considering the Appraisal Team's recommendations.

The main risk to BEP is the availability of adequate funding. Of the budget sought, 78% will be spent on schools and 11% on the partnership with government programme through PRIME. The other initiatives account for significantly smaller proportions. The Secondary School initiative, the Adolescent Development Programme and the Gonokendros each represent less than 4% of the budget.

If the funding sought is not available, decisions will have to be made on how to source funds elsewhere or how to reduce the activities planned for the proposed BEP. In the course of the Appraisal each of the programme components was found to be well thought out, worthwhile and deserving of support. In light of these findings, the Appraisal Team believes it is not appropriate for it to make a recommendation on what should be cut.

If a decision on cutbacks has to be made, it must be made by BRAC and the donors. However, the Appraisal Team recommends that the following considerations be taken into account if such a decision has to be made.

The **NFPE Schools Programme** is the largest and most costly component. It is an obvious area to look for cutbacks. It has to borne in mind, however, that any significant reduction in the number of schools has implications for staffing across the programme and by inference has implications for quality assurance. Unless BEP operates a substantial number of schools it

⁸³ Another mission has just started its work to examine BEP's institutional capacity in more detail.

cannot sustain current levels of attention to curriculum and material development, monitoring, quality enhancement, and teacher training and support. If these activities are compromised, the quality improvements put in place over the past three years will be jeopardised. If the numbers of schools are cut and the quality support structure is maintained intact, then the cost per child cannot be maintained at the proposed level. Apart from financial considerations, the newly launched Education Watch Report's findings of alarmingly low literacy rates across the country, suggests that cutbacks in the provision of a primary education service such as this would be an unwise move.

Under the **Partnership Programme with the GoB**, initiatives such as the pre-primary schools, community schools and SMCs fall within this programme. These initiatives represent the culmination of years of work to build relationships with national and local government.

For **Post-Primary Education Programme**, again, there is little saving to be made in cutting back on this component, being only 3.2% of the overall budget. The obvious need for such an intervention (especially in targeting children from disadvantage groups), plus the very positive government partnership which is developing provide strong arguments for donor support.

Apart altogether from the intrinsic educational value of each of these components, the implementation of these projects signifies a coming together of the formal and non-formal systems – a coming together that has been much sought after by both donors and BRAC. Cuts to this programme would set the partnership-building back and may even send a message that building such partnerships is not important.

The **Continuing Education Programme** accounts for a small part of the proposed budget. Initiatives within the Gonokendros will, to a large extent, become self-financing in the medium-term. Cuts to this programme would make little impact on the funding sought but would set adrift a worthwhile endeavour that now has a proven track record, for instance the very promising mobile libraries.

In relation to the **Adolescent Development Programme**, again there is little financial saving to be made from cutting back on this innovative and relatively low cost project which is providing extremely worthwhile social and life skills training to young women and men -- although there is a strong possibility of more funding being made available from UNICEF in the future⁸⁴.

⁸⁴ Interview with Nafisa Binte Shafique, Unicef Representative, 27.08.03

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

1 Background

1.1 The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Co-operative's (BRAC) Non-Formal Primary Education programme (NFPE) has been operating since 1985. It is one of BRAC's three core programmes (rural development, education and health) aimed at poverty reduction and social empowerment in rural communities, with special target emphasis on poor girls who have either never been to school or who have dropped out of the formal education system. Originally the NFPE programme focused on children aged 8 to 10 years and followed a three-year cycle covering Grades I to III. In 1988 the programme became known as Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC) when it was extended to include children aged 11 to 14 years. In 1991 the Education Support Programme (ESP) began with the intention of extending coverage of the NFPE model by operating through small partner NGOs supported technically and, in most cases, financially by BRAC in areas where BRAC was less well represented.

1.2 From the start the NFPE programme was part of BRAC's main rural development programme but, in 1996, it acquired the status of a separate core programme. Until 1993 it was supported by a varying group of donors but subsequently it received a major boost following the formation of the present donor consortium consisting of AKF/CIDA, DFID, the EC, the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), NOVIB, and UNICEF. Over the last ten years the programme has increasingly widened in size and scope consortium covering three separate phases as follows:

Phase I (1993-1996): During this phase BRAC scaled up its activities, more than doubling the number of schools from 15,000 to 31,000. It also consolidated its management infrastructure and further developed its support systems for teachers. New initiatives in this period included the creation of Resource Teachers, the opening Reading Centres/Union Libraries/Adult Literacy Centres and schools for ex-garment workers in conjunction with UNICEF, ILO and BGMEA.

Phase II (1996-1999): After the rapid growth of the programme during Phase I Phase II represented a stage of stabilisation and consolidation with the emphasis on qualitative improvements across all areas of operation. Key areas included materials and curriculum development, staff training, pedagogical support for teachers and management effectiveness. New initiatives included the piloting of Grades IV & V in NFPE schools, the development of innovative programmes such as CLIP, IRI and CLE and the piloting of pre-primary programmes.

Phase III (1999-2004): Phase III continued the emphasis on quality both at BRAC Headquarters under a newly formed Educational Development Unit and at field level through an extended management and administrative structure comprising of Resource Teachers, Batch Trainers, Master Trainers, and Quality Assurance Specialists. Greater impetus was also given to Phase II initiatives by the introduction of Grades IV & V in NFPE schools to pre-primary schooling, the adolescent development programme and the sustainability of Union Libraries and the piloting of IT and mobile libraries under the continuing education programme. There was also a major initiative to obtain closer collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in primary and post-primary education. Efforts were also made to provide equitable access to ethnic minority communities through non-formal primary and post-primary interventions.

2. Significant Features Proposed for BEP (2004-2009)

2.1 While the focus of BEP (2004-2009) will continue to be on improved quality education for poor girls in NFPE/BEOC/ESP schools BRAC is also seeking for further growth in the activities initiated in earlier phases together with diversification into some new areas that have hitherto been neglected by the national education system e.g.:

On-Going Work:

- Introduction of the full primary cycle in all NFPE/BEOC schools run by BRAC
- Further improving quality through the Educational Development Unit
- Improvement in programme support services, including capacity development, MIS, research, monitoring, and communications
- Development and mainstreaming of the pre-primary school model in an effort to reduce the number of dropouts from formal primary schools. This activity, together with assistance to government with post-primary teacher training, is seen to be one of the most immediate ways of working towards the desired end of closer collaboration with the GoB
- Adolescent development
- Continuing education services, in which the development of IT packages/training and cooperation with the GoB will play a significant part
- Mainstreaming mobile library and book rotation
- Development of interventions (including training) to enhance the professional development of subject teachers, management capacity and **post-primary non-Government institutions** for better learning
- Increased work with disadvantaged groups in particular pursuing and extending the ongoing work with ethnic minorities.

New Initiatives:

- Certification for NITE and post-primary school teachers
- Providing and developing schooling opportunities for disabled children
- Coordinating joint planning with Government in selected upazilas for primary school enrolment and provision of non-formal education
- Increasing participation of girls in science education
- Developing IT software packages for children and adults, and internet services for the rural community.

3 Scope of Work

3.1 The objective of the mission is to assess the appropriateness of the proposed NFPE (2004-2009) programme in the context of national policies and developments in the education sector in Bangladesh plus BRAC's own vision of its future role in education especially in the primary sector. The relevance, feasibility and sustainability of NFPE should also be assessed (see Annex 1 for a checklist of points to cover).

3.2 In making this assessment it is essential to note that the main concern of donors is the effective working of the primary education system in Bangladesh covering all groups of children. For the longer term donors are aiming for a government-led, sector-wide approach in which the non-formal education offered by BRAC and other NGOs can be merged with the formal PE system into a unified programme of quality primary education. While it is recognised that progress in this direction will be gradual, as the government has yet to articulate such a comprehensive sector approach, BRAC's dominant position in the non-formal sector plus the greater collaboration with government already achieved through its Primary Initiatives in Mainstreaming Education (PRIME) under NFPE III puts the BEP (2004-2009) programme in the forefront of the ongoing efforts to make further headway in the sector-wide approach. Specific questions that should be considered in this context are:

- in order to achieve the Education For All (EFA) goals how can the NFPE system as a whole become part of the primary education system in Bangladesh;
- how can BRAC's NFPE activities complement Government's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) II;
- what level of support for BRAC's NFPE activities exists within government;
- what kinds of financing mechanisms, apart from direct project support, can be envisaged for donor support to BRAC's NFPE programme; and
- what is BRAC's strategy, post- BEP (2004-2009), for phasing out donor support and either incorporating their programme into a Government supported mechanism or changing the focus of their education activities.

4 Appraisal Issues

4.1 The four key programme sectors to be addressed in the appraisal are non-formal primary schools, partnership with the GoB, the adolescent development programme (including continuing education) and BRAC's intervention in post-primary education. Each sector will be appraised in the context of the of the mission objective set out in the Scope of Work whilst at the same time paying specific attention to the following issues relating to individual sectors:

Non-Formal Primary Schools

- Consideration of the demand for and the number of schools to be included in the programme.
- Review of the progress made by BRAC in the development of textbooks/teachers guides/ supplementary materials in all subjects at all grade levels (to what extent should BRAC continue/need to rely on the use of GoB textbooks and materials for Grade IV and Grade V classes?)
- Assessment of the whole quality assurance mechanism and strategies adopted for the development of the EDU including those for monitoring and research by BEP itself and in conjunction with RED.
- Establishment of a systematic and summative assessment of children's learning achievement, especially for full cycle primary education, as an important tool for quality assurance.

Partnership with the GoB

- Activities under this heading are focused on three interventions: community schools, pre-primary schools and the PRIME programme.
- Community Schools - Assess the advantages and scope for these schools being transformed into formal primary schools - do they address the needs of the community and how does the GoB perceive the partnership with BRAC? This assessment should also consider the role of BRAC's eleven formal schools (previously referred to as "laboratory" schools).

- **Pre-Primary Schools** - Review the justification of the pre-primary model, its evolution and role in strengthening the linkages with the GoB.
- **PRIME** - Review the strategies and activities to date at both national and local level. Identify and comment on activities that are proving to be most effective in progressing the desired collaboration with the GoB. Recommend other activities that could add further impetus to the success of the PRIME initiative.

Adolescent Development Programme

Examine the rationale for expanding the activities within this programme and their relevance to BRAC's involvement in basic education for poor children. The rationale and strategies of the programme in terms of its contribution to gender empowerment should also be examined.

Assess the effectiveness of the APON programmes (for boys as well as girls) for:

- Imparting knowledge in social, health and legal matters that are fundamental to improving their welfare (e.g. how far is this knowledge being reflected in changed attitudes and practices of the recipients).
- Developing opportunities to adolescent girls for part and full time employment.
- Bringing about changes in the lifestyle and general well-being of poor rural women, thus showing the linkages between education and poverty reduction.

Continuing Education Programme

The progress and future course of the Continuing Education programme needs to be examined in the context of its contribution to the creation of a "learning society". Recent estimates (GoB lower figure, "Education Watch" of CAMPE higher figure) indicate that between 47 and 60 per cent of the population of Bangladesh is illiterate. BRAC has been working in this sector through its Reading Centres and Union Libraries since NFPE II. The Mission to determine to what extent is it practical for the programme to reach a wider audience through initiatives such as mobile libraries, introduction of IT services, and recasting the Union Libraries as multipurpose community centres providing a range of services that include sports and cultural activities, discussions and debates as well as being centres for all kinds of information exchange. The team should also examine existing and continuing cooperation with GoB departments in the area of cost-free, skill development training.

Post-Primary Education

BRAC only began working outside the primary education sector in the latter part of NFPE III when it carried out a pilot survey aimed at assessing where BRAC might make a useful contribution in solving the many problems that are apparent in secondary schooling. As a result of this survey BRAC intends to select 500 existing non-government secondary schools and develop them as "model" schools. The emphasis of BRAC's intervention in these schools will be on teacher training, material development and support activities including monitoring and evaluation. The Appraisal Team should assess the extent to which this approach is consistent with GoB education policy and with BRAC's own vision of its long-term role in the education sector.

5 Composition of the Mission

5.1 The appraisal team will consist of five consultants, four of whom will be financed by DFID and the fifth by NORAD.

5.2 The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the findings and recommendations of the Mission and for the submission of the Final Report at the end of the mission. He/she will also have particular responsibility as a team member for one of the four NFPE IV programme components (Schools/Post primary education, Partnership with the GoB, Adolescent development programme/ Continuing education and Institutional/Financial considerations). The other three components will be covered variously by the individual specialists.

5.3 The NORAD consultant will also participate in an accompanying Institutional and Organisation Analysis of BEP that will be undertaken in conjunction with the appraisal of NFPE IV.

5.4 All team members should have:

- An advanced degree in their appropriate field of specialisation
- At least ten years of relevant experience doing similar work
- Experience in South Asia, preferably in Bangladesh
- Experience in planning, monitoring and evaluating professional development programmes
- The ability to write clearly and analytically and to be able to work to deadlines
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills together with the ability to work with senior management as well as being a team-player.

6 Timing

6.1 It is expected that the Mission will start on 3 August 2003 and finish on 30 August 2003 except for the Team Leader who will stay in Bangladesh until 4 September 2003 to enable him/her to fully incorporate all comments on the draft appraisal report made by BRAC and members of the donor consortium and to finalise and deliver the report before he/she leaves the country.

6.2 The NORAD consultant will continue to work with the team undertaking the Institutional and Organisation Analysis. The work of that team will be staggered by one or two weeks with that of the NFPE appraisal team (i.e. from late-August to mid-September) so that they can build on the results of the sectoral analysis.

7 Reporting

7.1 The team will be given a formal briefing by BRAC and members of the donor consortium at the start of the Mission. They will also be provided with all documentation relevant to the appraisal, including specific policy/strategy documents produced by BRAC or individual donors.

7.2 The consultants will make a formal presentation of their findings and recommendations to BRAC and the Donor Consortium on 21 August 2003. A draft report incorporating comments made at the presentation will be submitted to the BRAC DLO on 25 August 2003. Written comments on the draft will be submitted to the DLO within three days of the draft report submission.

7.3 25 copies of the final report will be submitted before the team leader leaves Bangladesh.

8 Other Requirements

All mission members will report to the overall Team Leader of the Appraisal Mission.

Each member will be responsible individually for providing his/her own computing and printing equipment

Draft reports should be submitted to the Team Leader by the date to be agreed during the first day's briefing meeting.

July 2003

NFPE IV Appraisal, Annex 1

Relevance, Feasibility and Sustainability Check List

Relevance (Appropriateness of the NFPE-IV) in regard to:

- Education sector
- Government policy and program
- NGO policy and program
- Demand/need

BRAC policies, which might include:

- Goals/objectives
- Policies
- Past/current programs
- Lessons learned

Other considerations i.e. donor objectives

- Gender equality
- Capacity building
- Donor coordination
- Good governance

Feasibility (BRAC capacity to implement the NFPE-IV)

- Technical
- Managerial
- Financial

Sustainability

- Cost effectiveness
- Internal efficiency
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Donor relations
- Risks/challenges/mitigating strategies

Annex 2: List of Persons Consulted

Government

	Joint Secretary, MoPME	Dhaka
<i>Kazi Farid Ahmed</i>		
Mosadiqul Islam	DG, Directorate of Primary Education, MoPME	Dhaka
Abul Bashar	Director, Compulsory Primary Education	Dhaka
Md. Abdus Sattar	District Commissioner (DC)	Sherpur
Kazi Anwarul Huq	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	Sherpur
Md. Shamsuddin	District Primary Education Officer (DPEO)	Sherpur
Md. Ashrafuzzaman	Upazila Education Officer (UEO)	Sherpur
Md. Akram Hossain	Assistant Upazila Officer (AUEO)	Sherpur
Md. Abdul Matin	AUEO	Sherpur
Monika Parvin	AUEO	Sherpur
Zibon Nahar	AUEO	Sherpur
District Officer	Department of Women's Affairs	Sherpur
Md. Abul Hashem	DC	Jamalpur
Md. Zahif Hossain	Assistant District Education Officer (ADC)	Jamalpur
Md. Obaidullah	UEO	Jamalpur

Donors

Cornelius Hacking	First Secretary, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dhaka
Josephine Kalinauckas	First Secretary, Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, Dhaka
Ellen Marie Skaflestad	Royal Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka
Inger Sangnes	Royal Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka
Amanda Edmunds	Third Secretary, CIDA
Samira Tharani	Aga Khan Foundation, Dhaka

Others

Delwar Hussein	ADB Consultant, PEDP II, Dhaka
Dudley Blane	ADB Consultant, PEDP II, Dhaka
Eggen, Carol	Social Development Consultant, Dhaka
Graham White	Donor Liaison Co-ordinator, Donor Liaison Office, Dhaka
Mahmuda Alden	Donor Liaison Office, Dhaka

Nafisa Binte Shafique	Child Protection Section, Unicef
Saleh Motin	ADB Consultant, PEDP II, Dhaka
Sharif Ullah	ADB Consultant, PEDP II, Dhaka

BRAC, Dhaka

Name	Designation	Section
A.Z.M. Sakhwat Hossain		GPU
Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury	Executive Director	
Abdur Rashid	Materials developer, maths and science	PACE
Abu Zafor Md Hossain	PO	ADP
Adiya Ansari	Materials developer, maths and science	PACE
Afroza Khanam	QAS	ADP
Alok Kumar Mondal	Senior Area Manager	PACE
Amiya Kumar Chowdhury	Quality Assurance Specialist	CDU
Anup Kumar Talukder	Mathematics Group	EDU
Areefa Zafar	Materials developer	BEP
Atiquzzaman Khan	Programme Organiser, IT	PACE
Azizur Rahman	Regional Manager	PACE
Basabi Mahsuk	Sector specialist	BEP
Erum Mariam	Programme Head	BEP
Fahmida Naznin	Sector specialist	ADP
Fazle Hasan Abed	Chairperson / founder	
Hamida Akhter Zahan	AEM	CDU
Happy Dewan	Material Developer	EIC
Harun-ur Rashid	Senior Area Manager	ADP
Imran Matin,	Research Coordinator	RED
Irin Pervin	QAS	ADP
Jahanara Begum	Materials developer, science	EDU
Jasmine Zarker	Materials developer, English	PACE
Jaya sen Gupta	Programme Manager	PACE
Kabir Ahmed	Regional Manager	PACE
Kamal Hossain	Monitor	RED
Kaneez Selim	Materials developer, maths and science	PACE
Kaniz Fatema	Advisor	BEP
Kaniz Fatema Rikta,	Materials Developer	MIS Group
Khandaker Md. Ariful Islam	Programme Manager	BEP
Laila Farhana Apanan Banu	Social Studies Group (Grades I - III)	EDU
Lubna Yeasmin	Teacher Trainer, English	PACE
Mahfuzar Rahman	Computer operator	ADP

Name	Designation	Section
Manzoor Ahmed	Director	IoE, Project
Marufa Mazha	Material Development Specialist	EIC
Marzina Khatun	Materials developer	ADP
Md. Hyder Hossain	Data Management	MIS Group
Md. Kabir Taufiqul Islam	Unit Manager	MRU
Md. Abdul Quyyum	Sr. Regional Manager	PACE
Md. Abul Kalam	Research Associate	RED
Md. Aminul Alam	Deputy Executive Director	
Md. Helaluzzaman	Regional Manager	PACE
Md. Kaisar A. Khan,	Research Associate	RED
Md. Monwer Hossain	Programme Manager, GPU	BEP
Khandker		
Md. Shafiqul Islam	Materials developer, maths and science	PACE
Mir Nazmul Islam	In-charge, MRU	BEP
Mitul Dutta	Materials developer	ADP
Morsheda Parvin	Materials developer, Maths and science	PACE
Moshiur Rahman	Area Manager	PACE
Nahid Jabeen	Unit manager	ADP
Najneen Mahbooba	Materials developer, APON boys	ADP
Nazrul Islam	In-charge, QAS	CDU
Nelson Soren	Material Developer	EIC
Nil Ratan Halder	Senior Regional Manager	PACE
Profulla Chandra Barman	Sector Specialist	EIC
Rezaul Karim	PO	EDU
Rezaul Majid	Materials developer, English	EDU
Rosie Nilufar Yasmin,	Junior Research Associate	RED
Ruxana Hossain	Senior Materials Developer, English	PACE
S. N. Kairy	Head of Finance & Accounts	Accounts & Finance
Dr. Safiqul Islam	Programme Head	PACE
Saidur Rahman	Teacher Trainer, English	PACE
Sajeda Begum	Social Studies Group (Grades IV - V)	EDU
Sakhawat Hossain	Regional Manager	PRIME, BEP
Salma Parvin	Materials developer, Maths and science	PACE
Samina Nasreen Chowdhury	Teacher Trainer, English	PACE
Samir R. Nath	Senior Research Statistician	RED
Sarder Lutfur Rahman	Senior Material Development Specialist	ADP
Shahaduz Zaman	Medical Anthropology, Public Health	RED
Shova Shahnaz	Materials developer	ADP
Subir Kumar Das		ESP
Dr. Sudhir Chandra Sarker	Programme Coordinator	BEP

Name	Designation	Section
Sunil Kumar Gosh	Co-ordinator	ESP
Trishna Sagar	Unit Manager	EDU
Wahida Ifat	Management trainee	ADP

Schools, Centres and Institutions Visited

Name of institution		Team
Achim Team Office	Teacher Refresher Course	Achim
Amratoli	KK, APON II class	Sherpur
Chandrakona	Mobile library	Nakla
Chorshonamoi Community School		Tangail / Gopalpur
Dapunia pre-primary school	Discussion with RNGPS teachers	Jamalpur
Fulpur	Gonokendro (UL) with IT	Fulpur
Ganai Barua pre-primary	Focus-group meeting with parents and SMC members,	Sherpur
	(GPS catchment)	
Goda Shimla pre-primary		Jamalpur
Harirampur	KK school (grade IV)	Shambhuganj
Harirampur	Focus-group meeting with parents	Shambhuganj
Joganikanda Community School		Nalitabari
Kaknikona	Gonokendro (UL)	Tarakanda Thana
Kaknikona	Participants to Skill Development Programme	Tarakanda Thana
Kalapara	NFPE School, (grade V)	Dapunia
Kalitala Bazar (GPS campus)	Focus-group meeting with GoB teachers	Sherpur
Kampopur	KK, Focus-group meeting with parents	Jamalpur
Maddha Boyra	Pre-primary (GPS catchment)	Sherpur
Majipara	NFPE school (grade III)	Shambhuganj
Mariam Nagar	KK, indigenous	Sherpur
Mymensingh, BRAC TARC	Librarians' meeting	Mymensingh
Nakati GPS	Discussion with teachers	Jamalpur
Narkeli High School	APON boys group, observation	Jamalpur
Narkeli High School	Focus-group discussion with BRAC NFPE graduates	Jamalpur
Noabil High School	PBE – meeting with staff, SMC members, and observation of classes	Sherpur / Haluaghat
Nonni	Ethnic Minority School	Nonni
Nonni	BRAC, Ethnic Minority Staff Meeting	Nonni
Phulpur	Women's Group, skills training, Gonokendro	Fulpur Thana
Pirgacha High School	PBE - meeting with staff, SMC members, and observation of classes	Tangail / Modhupur
Raghurampur	High School. Teachers	Raghurampur
Raghurampur	High School, BRAC graduates	Raghurampur
Rangrapara High School	PBE - meeting with staff, SMC members, and observation of classes	Sherpur
Regional Office	SMC workshop observation (GPS)	Jamalpur
Regional Office	Focus-group discussion with PACE staff	Jamalpur
Regional Office	Focus-group discussion with ALs, AMs and	Jamalpur

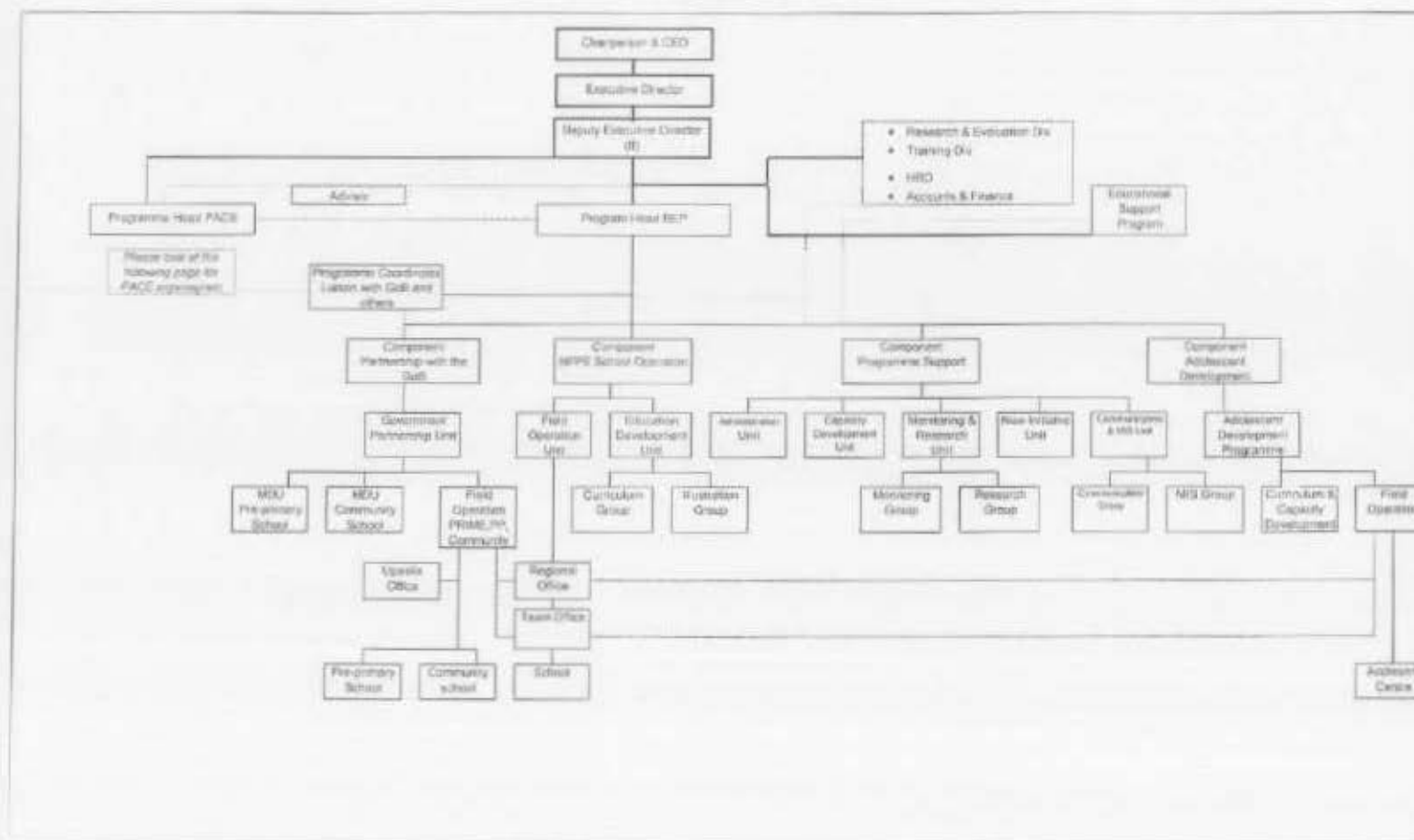
Name of institution		Team
	livelihood members	
Regional Office	Focus-group meeting with KS	Sherpur
Regional Office	Focus-group meeting with PS	Sherpur
Regional Office	Meeting with RM, UM, QAS, RSS, Monitors, PRIME staff and others	Sherpur
Samarchura	NFPE School (grade I)	Nonni
Shan Kanda model non-GoB registered Primary School	Focus-group meeting with PP course completers, SMC members, and GoB teachers	Sherpur
Shomkanda	KK	Jamalpur
TARC, Savar	PBE science Teacher-training course	PBE
	PBE maths Teacher-training course	
Ujangara	NFPE school (grade 1)	Dapunia

Annex 3: BEP Organogram

BRAC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

APPENDIX A

BEP ORGANISATION CHART - MAY 2003



Annex 4: Overall Perspectives of QAS and EDU Staff

A group of 6 QAS, the QAS Unit Manager, 6 Material Developers and the EDU Unit Manager took part in a brief discussion and gave individual written responses to three questions. The purpose of the session was to get a sense of (1) the areas of congruence and divergence in the priorities of both groups (2) the extent to which both groups are engaged in the kind of reflective thoughtful practices necessary to ensure meaningful exchanges between HQ based staff who are engaged in developing materials and teaching approaches and those who are intimately familiar with field needs and conditions.

The table below summarises the responses to the main question posed – What are the 3 priority areas in need of attention in your region/work?

QAS Group	EDU Group
Items mentioned relating to BEP programme enhancement Evaluation	Items mentioned relating to BEP programme enhancement Redesign curriculum in line with national terminal competencies prescribed by NCTB x 2 Develop competency based materials for grades 4 & 5 Revise/rewrite existing materials for grades 1 to 3 reflecting all the national competencies Design/write/develop workbook and teachers guide of social studies grade 2 mainly focused on national competencies Develop proper materials Adhere to the time limit
Items mentioned relating to the classroom Foster female learners x 3 Develop weak learners	Items mentioned relating to the classroom Be aware of the students' social context Develop the comprehension and reading skill of the students Develop the writing skills of the learner through creative writing Take the necessary steps to improve the overall status of the teaching-learning process of social studies (grades 1, 2, 3) and thus to ensure quality education about the same
Items mentioned relating to teacher capacity Develop the quality and effectiveness of refresher training x 6 Subject-based workshops x 4 Develop weak teachers	Items mentioned relating to teacher capacity Activities based curriculum Use easy methods and specific instructions Be conscious of the teachers' ability

QAS Group	EDU Group
Items mentioned relating to staff capacity Staff meetings x 2 Develop newly recruited staff x 2 Develop the capacity of MTs and BTs	Items mentioned relating to staff capacity Develop subject group members regarding pedagogical improvement x 2 Develop staff responsible for disseminating material at school level Develop core MTs for proper dissemination of materials and pedagogical methods x 2 Provide effective training to MTs, core group MTs, QASs for the purpose of proper dissemination Provide workshops with QAS

Before commenting on these responses it is important to point out that the QASs and EDU staff involved in the session are not necessarily representative of the total staff involved in either area of work. These 14 people participated in the session on the basis that they were on hand and willing to devote an hour or of their time. Furthermore the EDU staff wrote their answers in English so their scripts were immediately accessible to me. The QASs wrote in Bangla and their scripts were later translated. There is always a danger that the subtleties and nuances of expression in one language can be lost when translated to another. It is noteworthy that the EDU staff undertook the task of answering the questions posed with almost no conferring with each other while at least half of the QASs (mainly those who are very new appointees) conferred with a colleague sitting beside them. The discussions may have been to clarify what was required, to compare areas of concern in different regions or to stimulate thinking in response to the questions posed. The reasons are less important than the fact that the EDU staff's approach seemed to suggest that these are the sorts of questions they grapple with or pose among themselves on a regular basis.

Based on the responses listed in the above table and bearing in mind the factors mentioned above it is reasonable to say that the programme perspective of EDU staff is significantly broader than that of the QASs. EDU staff situated the particular items that need attending to within this broader overview and were therefore quite specific in what they pinpointed as needing attention. The QASs need to engage in this kind of 'big-picture-thinking' approach also so that they can better appreciate the contribution of field level activities to the overall goal of BEP. Both groups agreed that building the capacity of MTs is important.

The group was also asked to identify the key issues pertaining to one of the areas listed and to say what they were doing to address these issues. The answers to these questions are not included here. However, it is noteworthy that the answers provided by the EDU staff were in the main detailed and precise with a clear link between the overall goals of the programme and the specific actions they were taking. Most of the answers provided by the QASs tended to be broad and generalised and lacked the purposeful precision evident in the answers provided by EDU staff. Two of the QASs mentioned the work of Brigit Smith as having provided a model for them to use.

It would obviously be impossible to extrapolate generalised conclusions from an exercise involving so few staff and so few questions, nevertheless, in conjunction with other discussions and observations I feel it is fair to say that the QASs would benefit from more training that developed their analytical abilities and gave them a greater sense of BEP as a coherent educational programme in which the separate project areas and related activities are located.

Annex 5: Distribution of Dropout Students by Class in Secondary School

Classes	Former BRAC students %			Other %		
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
VI	40.8	15.6	24.1	23.1	21.3	22.1
VII	26.5	32.3	30.3	28.2	27.7	27.9
VIII	30.6	35.4	33.8	41.0	40.4	40.7
IX	2.0	16.7	11.7	7.7	10.6	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(number)	(49)	(96)	(141)	(39)	(47)	(86)

Source: Khan, Md. K.A. (2002) Status of BRAC graduates in secondary schools: An exploratory investigation. Research and Evaluation Division. P7

Annex 6: Monitoring Report Usage

Who can use which part?

BRAC Education Programme

School Performance Monitoring Report

Programme Head
Programme Manager

Grading	School
Academic	
Pedagogic	

To	Team In-charge	Team
Team Code	Region	CC: RM/QAS/MIS
Monitoring Date:	School Name:	Class: Type:
Total Student:	Today's Attendance:	Average Attendance
Sl No	Subject: Academic Indicators	Grade Specific Comment
01	Physical Aspects Condition of school house Black Board Calendar	
02	Teacher Oriented Aspects Teaching Aids Lesson Plan	
03	Learner Oriented Aspects Neat and Cleanness Openness and Discipline Learning Materials	
04	Evaluation Records	
05	Progress of co-curricular activities	
06	Home Tasks	
Pedagogic Indicators		Marking Grade
	Girls Boys	
07	Bangla.	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
08	Math	
	1.	
	2.	
09	Env. Study Social Study	
	1.	
	2.	
10	Science	
	1.	
	2.	
11	English	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

Regional Manager
Quality Assurance
Specialist
Team In-charge & PO/PS

Quality Assurance Specialist
Subject's Groups
Capacity Development Unit
PO/PS

Regional Manager
PO/PS

Name and Signature:

Unit Manager, Monitoring &
Research

Annex 7: Unit Cost

BRAC Education Program Unit Cost per School per course based on actual cost as of June 2003

	Head of Expenditure	Unit Cost Taka	Unit	Number/Quantity			Total Cost (per school per course)		
				NFPE	BEOC	ESP	NFPE	BEOC	ESP
A	Teachers Cost								
1	Teachers training (basic)	2,272	per course	1	1	-	2,272	2,272	-
	ESP (Training cost + conveyance of trainees)	2,480	per course			1			2,480
2	3 day orientation course (before opening school)								
	NFPE & BEOC (Including conveyance)	114	per course	1	1	-	114	114	-
	ESP	36	per course			1			36
3	Teachers Training (15 days on Math and Eng) (4th Phase)	2,272	per course	1	1	1	2,272	2,272	-
4	Refreshers course 1 day per month (Field based)								
	NFPE & BEOC (Including conveyance)	38	per month	48	36	-	1,824	1,368	-
	ESP	18	per month			36			648
5	Refreshers course 6 days (Prior to Grade II, III, IV and V)								
	NFPE & BEOC (including conveyance)	228	per course	4	4	-	912	912	-
	ESP	54	per course			3			162
6	Teacher Salary								
	Year 1 to year 3	675	per month	1	1	1	24,300	24,300	24,300
	Year 4 to year 5)	800	per month	1	-	-	9,600	-	-
7	Teaching aids and manual	1,039		1	1	1	1,039	1,039	502
8.0	Teachers Supplies								
8.1	Teacher Bag	92	per bag	1	1	1	92	92	92
8.2	Bound Exercise Book	8	per book	32	24	24	256	192	192
	Per School per year 8 Nos								
8.3	Ball pen	3	per ball pen	48	36	36	120	90	90
	Per School per year 12 Nos								
8.4	Clip File	5	per clip file	1	1	1	5	5	5
	Per School per Cycle 1 No								
8.5	Folding File	5	per folder	1	1	1	5	5	5
	Per School per Cycle 1 No								

Head of Expenditure	Unit Cost Taka	Unit	Number/Quantity			Total Cost (per school per course)		
			NFPE	BEOC	ESP	NFPE	BEOC	ESP
Total of A (Teachers cost)						42,811	32,661	28,512
B Student Books and Supplies								
1 Student Books (Grade-I)								
1.1 Bangla Text book(Part I)	12	per book	33	30	30	404	367	367
1.2 Shishu path	4	per book	33	30	30	116	105	105
1.3 Math Workbook	14	per book	33	30	30	462	420	420
1.4 Shahaj Path	3	per book	33	30	30	113	102	102
1.5 Paribash Parichiti Workbook	12	per book	33	30	30	403	366	366
1.6 Story Books (Per school)	268	per school	1	1	1	268	268	268
2 Student Books (Grade-II)								
2.1 Bangla Text book	8	per book	33	30	30	256	233	233
2.2 Math's Text book	15	per book	33	30	30	482	438	438
2.3 Social studies Text book	16	per book	33	30	30	542	493	493
2.4 English Workbook	14	per book	33	30	30	459	417	417
2.5 Story Books	120	per school	1	1	1	120	120	120
3 Student Books (Grade-III)								
3.1 Bangla Text book	9	per book	33	30	30	281	255	255
3.2 Maths Text book	14	per book	33	30	30	448	407	407
3.3 Social studies Text book	17	per book	33	30	30	557	506	506
3.4 English Text book	12	per book	33	30	30	384	349	349
3.5 Religion book	13	per book	33	30	30	413	375	375
4 Student Books(Grade IV)								
4.1 Bangla Text book	17	per book	33	30	-	568	516	-
4.2 Maths Text book	23	per book	33	30	-	765	695	-
4.3 Social studies Text book	19	per book	33	30	-	617	561	-
4.4 General Science	19	per book	33	30	-	617	561	-
4.5 English Text Book	15	per book	33	30	-	491	447	-
4.6 Religion Text book	12	per book	33	30	-	396	360	-
4.7 Maths Work book	42	per book	33	30	-	1,389	1,263	-
4.8 English Work Book	9	per book	33	30	-	282	256	-
4.9 General Science Work Book	44	per book	33	30	-	1,441	1,310	-
4.10 Social studies Work book	40	per book	33	30	-	1,310	1,191	-
5 Student Books(Grade V)								
5.1 Bangla Text book	18	per book	33	30	-	596	542	-
5.2 Maths Text book	27	per book	33	30	-	898	816	-
5.3 Social studies Text book	20	per book	33	30	-	645	587	-
5.4 General Science	13	per book	33	30	-	427	389	-
5.5 English Text book	19	per book	33	30	-	617	561	-
5.6 Religion Text book	17	per book	33	30	-	575	523	-
5.7 Maths Work book	20	per book	33	30	-	653	594	-
6 Student Supplies								
6.1 Slate	15	per slate	33	30	30	495	450	450

Head of Expenditure	Unit Cost Taka	Unit	Number/Quantity			Total Cost (per school per course)		
			NFPE	BEOC	ESP	NFPE	BEOC	ESP
6.2 Scale	3	per scale	33	30	30	87	80	90
6.3 Hard board	7	per board	33	30	30	215	195	210
6.4 Line drawing sheet	2	per sheet	33	30	30	73	66	66
6.5 Slate pencil	3	per dozen	33	30	30	396	270	132
Per year per Student 12 Nos								
6.6 Wood pencil	9	per student	33	30	30	1,196	815	216
Per year per Student 6 Nos								
6.7 Exercise book	20	per student	33	30	30	2,693	1,836	1,311
Per year per Student 12 Nos								
6.8 Pencil sharpener	10	per school	1	1	1	40	30	-
Per year per school 4 nos								
7 Supplementary Reading Materials								
7.1 Gonokendra	1,620	per cycle	1	1	1	1,620	1,620	720
Per year per school 48 copies								
7.2 Story Book								
Grade -II & III	190	per school	1	1	1	190	190	300
Grade -IV	140	per school	1	1	-	140	140	-
Per school per Cycle								
8 Classroom Supplies								
8.1 Signboard	160	per school	1	1	1	160	160	130
8.2 Blackboard	240	per school	1	1	1	240	240	240
8.3 Painting of Black boards	20	per school	1	1	1	80	60	60
Per year								
8.4 Trunk including lock	257	per school	1	1	1	257	257	257
8.5 Floor Mat	480	per school	1	1	1	480	480	360
8.6 Duster (2 nos Per Year)	7	per year	1	1	1	26	20	20
8.7 Chalk	112	per year	1	1	1	448	336	336
8.8 Classroom supplies	398	per school	1	1	1	398	398	398
9 School room renovation & maintenance	200	per month	1	1	1	9,600	7,200	5,400
Total of B (Students supplies)						36,826	31,234	15,917
C Field Operation								
1 Salary of P0/PA								
NFPE & BEOC (1 PO for 12 school)	458	per month	1	1	-	22,000	16,500	-
ESP (1 PO for 8 school)	275	per month			1			9,900
Technical Support Specialist (ESP)	126	per month			1			4,520
(1 TSS for 90 school)								
2 Salary of Team Incharge								
(1 Team incharge for 60 school)	128	per month	1	1	-	6,160	4,620	-

Head of Expenditure	Unit Cost Taka	Unit	Number/Quantity			Total Cost (per school per course)		
			NFPE	BEOC	ESP	NFPE	BEOC	ESP
Salary of Monitor (ESP) (1 Monitor for 900 school)	13	per month			1			452
3 Salary of Regional Manager NFPE & BEOC (1 RM for 750 school)	17	per month	1	1	-	800	600	-
ESP (1 RM for 900 school)	14	per month			1			500
4 Salary of Quality Assurance Specialist (1 QAM for 750 school)	15	per month	1	1	-	723	542	-
5 Salary of Accountant (1 Accountant for 300 school)	18	per month	1	1	1	880	660	660
6 Salary of Office Assistant (1 Office Assistant for 750 school)	5	per month	1	1	-	256	192	-
7 Salary of service Staff (1 Service staff for 130 school)	22	per month	1	1	-	1,052	789	-
8 Travelling & transportation (fuel for motor cycle & local conveyance)						6,164	4,623	3,206
9 Staff training & Development						3,056	2,292	1,603
10 Office Rent and Utilities NFPE & BEOC	43	per month	1	1	-	2,040	1,530	-
ESP	20	per month			1			706
11 Office stationeries and supplies	13	per month	1	1	-	640	480	-
12 General Expenses and Maintenance	21	per month	1	1	-	1,000	750	-
13 Overhead cost for Partner NGO (Office rent, utilities, stationery and other supplies)						-	-	3,299
Total of C (field operation)						44,772	33,579	24,847
D Research and Evaluation						1,107	830	830
E HO Management and Logistics Expenses						8,709	6,823	4,849
Total Cost for 1 school (Per cycle)	In Taka					134,224	105,127	74,955
	In US \$					2,314	1,813	1,292
Total Cost per student / year	In Taka					1,017	1,168	833
	In US \$					17.5	20.1	14.4
Total per student / grade	In Taka					813	701	833
	In US \$					14.0	12.1	14.4

Head of Expenditure	Unit	Unit	Number/Quantity			Total Cost (per school per course)		
	Cost Taka		NFPE	BEOC	ESP	NFPE	BEOC	ESP
Exchange rate 1 US \$ = Taka 58.5								
NFPE = Grade I to V in 4 years period								
BEOC = Grade I to V in 3 years period								
ESP = Grade I to III in 3 years period								

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